

THE PRINCIPAL AND THE UNSATISFACTORY

TEACHER: A FIELD STUDY

by

Joyce S. Luck

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

Educational Administration

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patrick W. Carlton, Co-Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sally M. Schumacher, Co-Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert R. Richards

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard S. Vacca

\_\_\_\_\_  
Wayne M. Worner

\_\_\_\_\_  
David J. Parks

May, 1985

Blacksburg, Virginia

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Appreciation is expressed to the members of the author's doctoral committee: Dr. Wayne Worner, Dr. Richard Vacca, Dr. Robert Richards, and Dr. David Parks, who gave of their time and expertise. Special thank to committee co-chairpersons, Dr. Sally Schumacher and Dr. Patrick Carlton, for their support and encouragement beyond the call of duty from the very beginning of this effort.

Special appreciation to Dr. Patricia Shifflett for support and assistance through the trying times.

Dedicated to my husband,           , and to my children,  
          ,           , and           , for their faith in me,  
and for all the missed holidays

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Title Page. . . . .	i
Acknowledgements. . . . .	ii
Dedication. . . . .	iii
Table of Contents . . . . .	iv
List of Figures . . . . .	xi
 Chapter	
1. Introduction . . . . .	1
Focus and Scope of Study. . . . .	4
Justification for Study . . . . .	5
Research on the Principalsip . . . . .	5
Field Research . . . . .	7
Analytical Framework . . . . .	8
Overview of Study . . . . .	8
2. The Principalsip And The Personnel Function: A Review Of The Literature . . . . .	10
The Development of the Principalsip. . . . .	10
Stages of Development . . . . .	11
Teacher-principal . . . . .	12
Principal-teacher. . . . .	13
Principal . . . . .	15

	Page
Major Studies of the Principalship During the 1960s . . . . .	20
A Complex Role . . . . .	26
Influences on the Role . . . . .	26
A Comparison of Roles . . . . .	28
Functions of the Principalship . . . . .	29
The Nature of the Job . . . . .	30
Major Problems for the Principals . . . . .	34
Coping Mechanisms . . . . .	38
The Effective Principal . . . . .	42
Summary . . . . .	46
<b>3. Field Research: Methodology and Procedures.</b> . . . .	48
Definition and Rationale. . . . .	48
Definition. . . . .	48
Rationale . . . . .	51
Participant Observation in this Study . . . . .	53
Participant Observation . . . . .	53
The Role of the Researcher . . . . .	53
Collection and Analysis of Data . . . . .	57
Field Notes and Other Sources of Data . . . . .	57
Analysis of Data. . . . .	60
Sampling . . . . .	61

	Page
Confidentiality . . . . .	62
Reliability and Validity . . . . .	62
Summary . . . . .	64
Notes . . . . .	65
4. Ridgemont County School System: The Environment and the Organization . . . . .	67
Ridgemont School System and Its Environment: A History of Growth . . . . .	67
Historical Perspective . . . . .	67
Outside Forces. . . . .	69
"Catching Up" . . . . .	70
A Period of "Vision" . . . . .	70
Continued Improvement . . . . .	71
Ridgemont County . . . . .	72
Ridgemont School System: 1979-1980 . . . . .	73
Ridgemont School System . . . . .	75
Organizational Structure . . . . .	75
Schools. . . . .	79
Relationships . . . . .	80
School Board Members . . . . .	80
Superintendent . . . . .	82
Teachers . . . . .	84
Principals . . . . .	86

	Page
Summary . . . . .	90
Notes . . . . .	91
5. Organization Of The Personnel Function In Ridgemont School System . . . . .	92
External Forces. . . . .	92
Internal Forces . . . . .	94
The Personnel Function Of Principals In Ridgemont . . . . .	96
Identification of New Staff . . . . .	98
Orientation of New Staff . . . . .	99
Assignment of Staff. . . . .	100
Staff Development . . . . .	102
Evaluation of Staff. . . . .	104
The Development Of A Procedure For Resolving Personnel Problems In Ridgemont. . . . .	105
Ridgemont's First Step. . . . .	105
A Support System. . . . .	106
Principals' Options for Resolving Personnel Problems. . . . .	110
Level I Actions . . . . .	113
Formal Conference. . . . .	113
Written Directive. . . . .	113
Written Reprimand. . . . .	113
Evaluation. . . . .	114

	Page
Reassignment . . . . .	115
Level II Actions . . . . .	115
Transfer. . . . .	115
Suspension . . . . .	116
Probation . . . . .	116
Nonrenewal . . . . .	117
Dismissal . . . . .	118
The Grievance Procedure . . . . .	119
Summary . . . . .	122
6. The Problem Of The Unsatisfactory Teacher In Ridgemont School System. . . . .	124
Nature and Classification of Personnel Problems In Ridgemont School System . . . . .	125
Incompetency . . . . .	126
Skills . . . . .	127
Attitude. . . . .	129
Relationships . . . . .	130
Immorality . . . . .	130
Noncompliance with School Rules and Regulations . . . . .	131
Other Good and Just Cause . . . . .	131
Distribution of Personnel Problems In Ridgemont School System . . . . .	132
The Identification-Resolution Process . . . . .	134



	Page
Step 1 - Awareness of Problem. . . . .	138
Step 2 - Analysis of Problem . . . . .	145
Step 3 - Definition of Problem . . . . .	167
Step 4 - Selection of Alternative Actions. .	177
Step 5 - Implementation of Selected Actions .	187
Resolution of Level II Actions. . . . .	189
Recommendations for Transfer . . . . .	189
Recommendations for Nonrenewal . . . . .	190
Recommendations for Dismissal . . . . .	194
Summary . . . . .	197
7. Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Implications . . . . .	199
Summary . . . . .	199
Discussion . . . . .	205
Conclusions . . . . .	208
Implications. . . . .	213
Practice . . . . .	213
Research . . . . .	214
Methodological Observation . . . . .	215
Works Cited . . . . .	217
Appendix A Summary Of Unsatisfactory Teacher Cases . . .	224
Appendix B The Decision Making Process . . . . .	249

	Page
Vita. . . . .	252
Abstract . . . . .	254

## FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Ridgemont County School Board Administrative Personnel Organizational Chart . . . . .	76
2. Ridgemont County School System Specialization Organizational Chart . . . . .	78
3. Level I and Level II Actions for Resolving Personnel Problems in Ridgemont . . . . .	112
4. The Nature and Frequency of Problems of Incompetency in Ridgemont . . . . .	128
5. Distribution of Problems by Category and School Level in Ridgemont . . . . .	133
6. The Identification Resolution Process . . . . .	137

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

While one must certainly look at the behavior of the administrator, only the behavior of the administrator as it relates to the decision process is of any consequence in evaluating the worth of an organization.

Griffiths (1959:92)

If asked to describe the "ideal" principalship, principals in most school systems would definitely include on that wishlist their desire to have a staff of competent, dedicated teachers who work well together, striving always to do what was in the best interest of the school and the school system as a whole. A part of that scenario would reveal how all teachers would give one hundred percent and, as a result, the school would be characterized as a harmonious, cooperative, healthy, and highly productive work climate. Absenteeism and tardiness would be almost non-existent; there would be no arguments, no disappointments, no aggravations, and no need for disciplinary action because the teachers would be happy, well adjusted, knowledgeable of and devoted to the students they taught. They would be confident, highly motivated...

The principals would have to stop at that point in their description. Utopias do not exist and everyone knows that, especially the principals. Their world is a world of reality, and that reality dictates what every experienced principal knows--that every teacher

in the system has varying needs and dispositions that are not always in tune with a school's or the school system's goals. The principals are also aware that there are differing levels of competency among the teachers within their individual schools. As a result, they are often challenged by the nature of the personnel problems they encounter in the day-to-day operation of their schools. The reality of any principal's world is that, at some point in time, the principal will face the unsatisfactory teacher, often referred to as the ineffective teacher, the marginal teacher, the problem teacher, or the incompetent teacher. For whatever reason, the unsatisfactory teacher is not meeting the principal's or the school system's requirements or standards for the teaching position he/she occupies.

To a principal, the unsatisfactory teacher can be the "fly in the ointment" to a smooth running school. Of all the decisions made by a principal, those pertaining to the unsatisfactory teacher are perhaps the most difficult. Although many of these decisions are seemingly routine and simple in nature, the potential for complexity and conflict is always present because the decisions are about people. Because human nature is so unpredictable, principals find that simple decisions become complex ones, solvable problems often seem out of reach, and the "right" decision becomes clothed in a shroud of emotion and guesswork. Some principals seem to have no difficulty in making the right decision when dealing with the unsatisfactory teacher, while the majority of principals "fly by the seat of their pants"

and hope that the right decision was the one they just made.

The addition of one more reality to the principals' world provided the impetus for this study--the effectiveness of principals in certain school systems is frequently determined by their ability to recognize unsatisfactory performance and to deal appropriately with the teacher in question. That reality, coupled with the inherent dilemmas in dealing with human behavior, created an emotional onus for the principal and, thus the necessity for this study.

Although efforts have been directed in recent years toward a more indepth approach to studying the principalship, especially the tasks associated with the principalship, little attention has been given to the personnel management aspect of the job. No studies are available at this time that would provide some insight into the dynamics of dealing with the unsatisfactory teacher. This case study provides that indepth look into the behavior of certain principals in one suburban school system who were confronted with unsatisfactory teachers during 1979 to 1980.

This study describes, analyzes, and interprets the dynamics involved when principals in one school system were faced with decisions regarding teachers whose behavior was deemed unsatisfactory by the principals. For a period of one school year, the researcher interacted with and observed principals, took field notes, and gathered documents while assuming the research role of participant-observer.

### Focus and Scope of Study

This study focuses on certain principals in one school system as they performed a very important and difficult personnel task, the identification of unsatisfactory teachers and the resolution of problems pertaining to those teachers. The research question is: how does the principal in Ridgemont County School System perform the personnel task of identifying and resolving personnel problems associated with the unsatisfactory teacher? The principal was chosen as the primary focal point for this study because the principal had the responsibility for the performance of his or her staff.

In order to describe the personnel task of the principal, it is necessary to describe and analyze three sub-topics. First, what were the types of teacher behaviors that principals identified as unsatisfactory? Second, having identified the unsatisfactory behaviors, what actions were then taken by the principals in an attempt to resolve the problems? Third, what are the factors which influenced the principals' decision making during the identification-resolution process? For the sake of brevity, the term, identification-resolution process, shall be used to refer to the period of time from the initial identification of a problem by a principal until a resolution is reached.

This study is limited to one school system, Ridgemont County School System, and to the principals within the system who identified unsatisfactory teachers within their individual schools and reported

those problems to the Director of Personnel. Other participants were included in the study as they interacted with the principals or as they played some role in the identification-resolution process. All of the personnel problems reported by the principals were included in this study.

The scope of this study includes the participants, the settings, and the time period. The participants at the school level included principals, assistant principals, department heads, and teachers. At the central office level, the superintendent, assistant superintendents, the director of personnel, directors of instruction, supervisors, and the school board attorney became participants at various stages of the identification-resolution process. Participants outside the school system included the UniServ Director, lawyers, and one teacher representative from the State personnel department.

The study took place during the 1979-1980 school year which commenced on August 23, 1979 and ended on June 10, 1980. The study was extended through the end of August 1980 in order to include the resolution of one personnel problem.

### Justification For Study

#### Research On the Principalship

Research studies conducted during the late 1970s revealed that principals find the unsatisfactory teacher to be a source of irritation (Gorton and McIntyre, 1978; Byrne, Hines, and McCleary, 1978)



and stress (Koff, Laffey, Olson, and Cichon, 1979) for them in their jobs. It was also determined that principals, in general, feel insecure and inadequate, as well as frustrated when confronted with such teachers, particularly when dismissal becomes the ultimate solution to the problem (Koff, Laffey, Olson, and Cichon, 1979; Pharis and Zachariya, 1979; Gorton and McIntyre, 1978; Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980; and, Neill and Custis, 1978).

The research findings are important because they pinpoint the unsatisfactory teacher as a major source of concern and stress for principals at all levels of the principalship. Beyond that awareness, however, the studies provide very little insight into why principals feel as they do about the unsatisfactory teacher. Such an apparent void in research is not unique to the educational field. Mitchell and Green (1978), O'Reilly and Weitz (1980), and Miner and Brewer (1976) raise concern over the lack of research on the unsatisfactory employee and contend there is a definite need to know how administrators diagnose poor performance and how they deal with the employee once the problem is identified.

It is very unsettling that at the threshold of the 1980s when principals are being held more accountable than ever before for the performance of their teachers that a tremendous dearth exists in the literature and in research regarding the principal and the unsatisfactory teacher. Supervision of teachers and evaluation of teacher performance are areas in which the principal's role has not been given

adequate attention by researchers. That fact, coupled with a similar dearth of information in the literature, particularly in textbooks, creates a dilemma for principals who readily admit their insecurities and inadequacies when dealing with teacher performance but find little solace and few answers by turning to the literature. Most of the literature in school administration and personnel administration is of a normative nature, focusing on how principals "ought to" deal with personnel. Such literature often infers that if a principal hires the right person for a particular job, all that remains is the "fine tuning" of that individual for success. Little attention is given to the unsatisfactory teacher, and few clues, if any, are given concerning the nature of personnel problems that principals might encounter.

### Field Research

Field research, an accepted method of research in Sociology and anthropology, has only in recent years been used in the study of principals. Not until the 1970s did researchers begin to probe deeply into the world of the principal--deeper than survey instruments and questionnaires would take them--by spending time with principals, observing them in action, and interviewing them extensively. Wolcott's (1973) ethnographic approach to the study of one elementary principal was followed by Blumberg and Greenfield's study (1980) of "out of the ordinary principals" and Crowson and Porter-Gehrie's study (1980) of urban principals. Those studies provided, for the first time,

a "feel" for the principalship and the men and women who occupy those positions. Although each study has added more to our knowledge of the principalship, the picture is far from complete. This study is an effort to add another "slice of life" to what we know about the world of the principal.

### Analytical Framework

The framework for analysis centered around factors involved in principals identification of unsatisfactory teachers and the resultant decision making applied by those principals. The focus is on the behaviors of principals as they worked to resolve the various types of teacher problems, and on the influences and constraints affecting their decision making.

Two schemes of analysis were utilized. One analytical scheme summarized and characterized the types of unsatisfactory teacher behaviors and the frequencies of those behaviors. A second scheme analyzed the decision making behaviors of principals during the identification-resolution process. This analysis evolved around the development of a decision making model, which included the following five phases: identifying unsatisfactory teachers, analyzing the problems, defining the problems, selecting alternative actions, and implementing the selected actions.

### Overview Of Study

The following chapters describe research findings on the princi-

palship, define field research, describe the environment and the organization of the personnel function in Ridgemont, analyze the behavior of principals during the identification-resolution process, and summarize the study. Chapter II describes the more recent research findings on the principalship that impact on personnel management. Chapter III defines field research, focusing on participant observation as the primary methodology for this study. Chapter IV describes the environment and the organization of Ridgemont School School, highlighting the relationships between the school board, the superintendent, the teachers, and the principals in Ridgemont. Chapter V describes the personnel function, the expectations for that function held for principals in Ridgemont, and the strategies and procedures for dealing with unsatisfactory teachers. Chapter VI describes the nature of the problems associated with the unsatisfactory teachers, and analyzes the behavior of principals during the identification-resolution process. Chapter VII summarizes the major findings of the study and suggests research implications.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PRINCIPALSHIP AND THE PERSONNEL FUNCTION:

#### A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

What the service institutions need is not better people. They need people who do the management job systematically and who focus themselves and their institution purposefully on performance and results. They do need efficiency, that is, control of costs, but above all they need effectiveness, that is, emphasis on the right results.

Drucker (1974:166)

This chapter is an attempt to portray the principalship as it exists in the literature at the threshold of the 1980s. The principalship is traced from its inception through its various stages of development with special attention being paid to the development of the personnel management function. The literature and the research findings from the late 1960s to the present serve as the primary sources of information, primarily because a substantial body of research<sup>1</sup> during that period supports the concept that the principal is more than likely the key to an effective school (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980; Byrne, Hines, McCleary, 1978; Goldhammer et al, 1971; Gorton and McIntyre, 1978; Persell and Cookson, 1982; Yukl, 1982).

#### The Development Of The Principalship

Plagued by ambiguity, beset by critics, confused by the multitude of expectations, emersed in vagueness, and doubtful of the future, the principal, as portrayed in the literature of the 1970s, can best be

described as a "survivor". It seems ironic that after being in existence for over a century the importance of the principalship is just now beginning to emerge as researchers, one after the other, support the concept that the principal is the key to an effective school. As the result of such speculation, a substantial body of research emerged in the 1970s and the 1980s that provided deeper insights into the principalship as researchers sought to learn more about the nature of the job, its demands and complexities, and to determine the characteristics that separate "effective" principals from other principals. Although it is evident that those findings are only the "tip of the iceberg" to a body of knowledge that will emerge from present and future research, this chapter represents an attempt to present the findings that are relevant to the personnel management aspect of the job, or as the chapter title implies, the personnel function of the principalship. In order to understand the principalship as it exists at the present time, it is necessary to trace the development of the position through various stages.

#### Stages of Development

The principalship did not begin as a carefully planned, well-defined position (Goldman, 1966:2). It emerged in response to the "complexities that plagued urban school systems" (Knezevich, 1975:381). As the early cities grew, the schools grew and changed in response to the societal needs, and the principalship evolved as a means of meeting the growing demands of larger, more complex schools and school systems.

Background information on the principalship is at best sketchy. Knezevich (1975:390) points out the sparcity of information and exemplifies it by a quote from Ensign who describes the secondary principalship as a position that "has no history". Most writers on the subject refer to Pierce's (1935) book, The Origin and Development Of The Public School Principalship, as their primary source of information on the development of the principalship through the early part of the 20th Century. After that time, information regarding the principalship is limited, but information can be gleaned from the literature that indicates the principalship continued to grow and change in response to the needs and demands of society.

Knezevich (1975:382) depicts four stages in the development of the principalship: "First there were teachers; then teachers with some administrative responsibilities, still later the principal-teacher, who was more of an administrator than a teacher; and finally a principal". With the exception of the teacher stage, the stages in the development of the principalship will be presented.

Teacher-principal. The teacher-principal position was in existence from the time of the establishment of the American colonies to the middle of the 19th Century. The autonomy of the teacher-principal was unquestioned as he taught all subjects to all students in a one-room schoolhouse. Hencley, McCleary and McGrath (1970:102) describe the autonomy of the teacher-principal:

Both the proprietors of the Dame Schools and the private tutors controlled the content and method of instruction to be offered

their pupils. No authority existed beyond them except the sanctions patrons might exert by giving or withholding patronage.

Even after the colonies enacted compulsory school attendance laws and began establishing agencies for external control of the schools, the teacher-principal continued to teach with near autonomy (Hencley, McCleary and McGrath, 1970:102). The headmaster, the fore-runner of the secondary principalship, was a teacher-principal position. There were high expectations for the conduct of the headmaster (Knezevich, 1975:391):

He was required to be a great teacher and a great disciplinarian, not given to 'wanton dalliances and unseemly behavior' with women, (nor to be) a follower of vain, gaudy fashions of apparel, a papist, a wearer of long curled hair, a puffer of tobacco, or addicted to dicing, carding, or other unlawful games.

The duties of the headmaster were not entirely confined to instruction (Jacobson et al., 1963:491):

In addition to teaching and administering his school he often served as town cler, church chorister, official visitor of the sick, bell ringer of the church, grave digger, and court messenger, and performed other occasional duties.

Principal-teacher. As urbanization increased and the schools expanded, the teacher-principal evolved into the principal-teacher. In 1839, the principal-teacher was created in Cincinnati, Ohio. A special committee appointed by the Board of Education defined the responsibilities of the position, gave clear instruction to the other teachers about their roles as subordinates, and established qualifications for the position. Goldman (1966:3-4), using Pierce (1935) as his source, relates the work of the committee, defining the responsi-



bilities of the principal-teacher and others:

1. To function as the head of the school charged to his care;
2. To regulate the classes and course of instruction of all the pupils;
3. To discover any defects in the school and apply remedies;
4. To make defects known to the visitor or trustee of the ward or district if he were unable to remedy conditions;
5. To give necessary instruction to his assistants;
6. To classify pupils;
7. To safeguard school houses and furniture;
8. To keep the school clean;
9. To instruct assistants;
10. To refrain from impairing the standing of assistants, especially in the eyes of their pupils;
11. To require the cooperation of his assistants.

The remaining faculty members, called assistant teachers, were instructed to:

1. Regard the principal teacher as head of the school;
2. Observe his directions;
3. Guard his reputation;
4. Make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the rules and regulations adopted for the government of the schools.

The special committee further pointed out that the qualifications for the position of principal teacher were to include a knowledge of teaching methods, an understanding of children's characteristics and behavior, and a feeling for the common problems of the schools.

The principal-teacher position was usually given to "some 'best' teacher--to be filled in addition to teaching duties for extra compensation" (Hencley, McCleary and McGrath, 1970:103). Although the principal-teacher had, for the first time, responsibility for the direction of other staff members, he "...was a counter of supplies and a dispenser of textbooks. He bore no responsibility for educational change or determination of objectives" (Hencley, McCleary and McGrath, 1970: 103).

Principal. By 1900, "the principal had become the directing manager, rather than the 'presiding teacher' of the school" (Blumberg and Greenfield (1980:11). Blumberg and Greenfield (1980:12) point out that three critical functions of the principalship had been established by 1900. Those functions included: "the organization and general management of the school; the supervision of instruction and staff development; and the interpretation of the work of the school to the immediate school community".

Not only did the principal have responsibility for staff development and supervision, but he was also given autonomy in other areas of personnel management, such as "...the right to have orders or suggestions to teachers given only through the medium of principals, and a right to a voice in transfers and assignments of teachers connected with their schools....the right to direct teachers" (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980:11). The autonomy enjoyed by the principal in the early part of the 20th Century is further stressed by Houts (1975:65):

Rarely did superintendents interfere with individual schools; teacher selection, placement, promotion, and salaries were left up to the principal, who was free to run his school in as authoritarian a manner as he wished.

The early principalship was not without its difficulties. The first hint of ineffectiveness on the part of some of the early principals is given by Goldman (1966:5) who declares that the principals were not equal to the responsibility of providing assistance to their teachers. He attributes this failure to two factors--poor preparation and lack of interest in supervision. He describes the insecurity of

the principals (Goldman, 1966:5):

Concerned with details and routine, content to serve as a transmitter of directives from the superintendent to teacher, afraid to experiment and to innovate, interested in security and self-preservation, the early school principal did little to establish himself as an educational leader.

Although the expectations for the principal's role changed, the behavior of the principal remained as it had in the past (Goldman, 1966:5):

The principals were slow individually and as a group to take advantage of the opportunities for professional leadership which were granted to them. This tendency was especially marked during the period 1895-1910. The principalship was well established from an administrative point of view, and at that point, principals appeared content to rest. Except for sporadic cases, they did little to study their work, experiment with administrative procedures, or publish articles on local administration and supervision. The large body of them were satisfied to attend to clerical and petty routine, administering their schools on a policy of laissez faire. They were generally entrenched behind their tenure rights and they usually hesitated to show vigorous leadership to their teachers who naturally were often as reactionary, professionally, as the principals themselves. They were content to use 'rule of thumb' procedures in dealing with supervision of instruction. (Pierce, 1935:21)

The lack of training for the principal was very evident in the early 1900s. Although certification was granted to principals in 1911 "as a measure to protect the public against incompetents" (Cornett, 1983:5), approximately two-thirds of the principals, as late as 1920, held no academic degree, and there were no qualifications for the elementary principalship other than teaching experience (Hencley, McCleary and McGrath, 1970).

There was very little assistance available to the principals during those early days of "becoming". According to Goldman (1966:5),

it was not until the 1920s "...that a serious attempt was made to focus upon the principalship as an important position in education".

After the establishment of the principalship in the early 1900s, developments in the principalship informally paralleled those in the broad field of administration, although more slowly. To a large extent, the principalship continued to be affected by societal changes, and "reflected, in part, the changing conceptions school superintendents held for themselves as educational administrators" (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980:13).

As business and industry responded to the Industrial Revolution with "Scientific Management" as the basis for managing their organizations, so also did the leaders in education. According to Owens (1981:12), superintendents in the United States quickly adopted the the values and practices of efficiency management:

Emphasis was on efficiency (that is, low per-unit cost), rigid application of detailed, uniform work procedures (often calling for minute-by-minute, standard operating procedures for teachers to use each day throughout a school system), and detailed accounting procedures. Though some educational administrators harboured doubts about all of this, there was a rush among school superintendents to get aboard the bandwagon of the day to adopt the jargon and practices of those with high status in the society--business executives.

Since scientific management detailed the jobs to be performed, college professors studied and analyzed what superintendents did on the job. Owens (1981:13) describes one such study and the training to prepare superintendents for their jobs:

Fred Ayer, at the University of Texas, for example, surveyed superintendents to find out what kind of work they did in 1926

to 1927. Nearly all reported 'attending board meetings, making reports, and supervising teachers, 80 percent...reported that they went to the post office daily; and each week half of them operated the mimeograph machine,...93 percent inspected toilets, and 93 percent inspected the janitor's work'. To prepare individuals to become school superintendents, therefore, programs of study often featured courses in budgeting, heating and ventilating, methods for performing janitorial services and sanitation tasks, writing publicity releases, and record keeping. Professors...commonly conducted studies to determine (for example) the cheapest methods of maintaining floors...in order that they could prepare prospective school superintendents with the skills necessary to train janitorial workers.

The extent of the industrially oriented philosophy in education was expressed by Cubberly (Hencley, McCleary and McGrath, 1970:104) in his 1916 textbook:

Our schools are, in a sense, factories in which the raw products (children) are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life. The specifications for manufacturing come from the demands of the Twentieth Century civilization, and it is the business of the school to build its pupils according to the specifications laid down. This demands good goals, specialized machinery, continuous measurement of production to see if it is according to specifications, the elimination of waste in manufacture, and a large variety in the output.

During the early 1900s, the principal was emerging as an "efficiency expert" or "technician". His role at that time is described by Goldman (1966:7):

The central focus of his training was upon such matters as budgeting, school construction, and pupil-accounting. He was beginning to view himself as a business-executive-in-education. The temper of society during this period reinforced that image and even demanded that he hold it.

The scientific management movement was somewhat abandoned in the 1930s (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980:14) and "the face of education began to take on a new look, and a new philosophy of administration

slowly took place" (Goldman, 1966:17) as the "Human Relations" approach emerged. It was during this period that emphasis was placed on employee motivation and job satisfaction, as the result of the works of Mary Parker Follett and the findings of the Hawthorne studies. During this period, 1935-1950, new concepts were available to principals. They included: "(1) morale, (2) group dynamics, (3) democratic supervision, (4) personnel relations, and (5) behavioral concepts of motivation" (Owens, 1981:17). One concept, democratic supervision, seemed to receive greater emphasis than some of the other concepts. Hoy and Miskel (1978:10) show the extent of its use:

The ill-defined watchword of the period was 'democratic'--democratic administration, democratic supervision, democratic decision making, democratic teacher. As Roald Campbell noted, 'This emphasis on human relations and democratic practices often meant a series of prescriptions as to how conditions ought to be and how persons in an organization ought to behave.'

Button (1966:221) felt that the democratic emphasis "...left the administration in a position of diminished power and esteem, although the technical services which he could provide were still required". Hencley, McCleary and McGrath (1970:107) describe the results of the democratic practices for elementary principals:

The elementary school principal often came to be pictured as a type of social catalytic agent who stimulated interpersonal relationships among students and teachers without exercising prerogatives over the directions to be taken by the educational enterprise. That authority in organizations must be exercised and that leaders in organizations must lead were administrative axioms that appeared expendable to certain extreme groups.

Proponents of the human relations movement were more readily found in the supervisory ranks, including the principalship, than they were

in the superintendency level. Superintendents "tended to emphasize attention to budgets, politics, control, and the asymmetrical exercise of power from the top downward" (Owens, 1981:20).

During a period of less than fifty years, the pendulum moved from the emphasis on scientific management to an almost extreme human relations approach. The extremes in the two viewpoints of management paved the way for the "Behavioral Science" approach. That approach acted as a synthesis of the other two views and stressed the dynamics of the interrelationships between the organizational structure and the people who populated it.

Button (1966:222) writes, "In part, the new doctrine was an honest attempt to restore the prestige of administrators by professionalizing administration". That professionalization became evident as educational administration became recognized as a field of study. Research activity was extensive from the mid-1950s through the 1960s (Hoy and Miskell, 1982; Owens, 1981).

#### Major Studies of the Principalship During the 1960s

Although interest in the principalship was sparked during the 1960s, the principalship was far from being a well-defined and/or a well established position. Principal-teachers were a fairly common phenomenon in elementary schools during the 1960s (Goldhammer et al., 1971). Goldman (1966:9-11) attributes the lag in the development of the principalship to three factors: insularity of the three levels

of the principalship--elementary, junior/middle, and high schools; the uniqueness of school systems throughout the country; and the imprecise definition of the role.

Most of the research conducted during the 1960s pertained to elementary principals. Three studies will be reviewed because they demonstrate the ambiguity that surrounded the principalship in the 1960s and reveal the disparity that existed in the effectiveness of elementary principals, especially in the area of personnel management.

Gross and Herriott (1965), in an attempt to dispel the view that principals should not exert a leadership role in staff performance, studied the Executive Professional Leadership (EPL) of 175 elementary principals in forty large school systems. According to Gross and Herriott, Executive Professional Leadership was "...the effort of an executive of a professionally staffed organization to conform to a definition of his role that stresses his obligation to improve the quality of his staff performance" (1965:8). They concluded (1965:151-160):

1. The stronger the professional leadership offered by the principal's immediate superior, the greater his EPL, particularly if the superior assisted the principal in understanding the sources of the principal's problems and if the superior took an interest in the professional development of the principal.
2. Principals who were allowed to select teacher applicants for positions in their schools had a higher level of EPL.
3. If the superior strongly endorsed the principal's efforts to improve the performance of his/her staff, the principal exhibited a higher EPL.
4. The smaller the school, the greater the EPL.
5. Principals who had the greatest amount of formal education did not provide the greatest EPL.



Gross and Herriott also proposed a number of conditions that could hamper the principal's effectiveness as a leader of his/her staff:

...one being his unwillingness to allow teachers to participate in decisions about central school issues....A second condition may be his stress on distinctions of status, that is, on his bureaucratic relationship to teacher....A third may be his unwillingness or inability to offer them social support....A fourth may be lack of managerial support they receive from him... and a fifth may be his failure to stand behind his teachers when their authority over pupils is questioned.

They summarized their findings in this manner (1965:151);

Our findings bear upon a basic controversy over the role of school principals....On the vexing problem of the respective rights and obligations of principals and teachers, our findings have some bearing. If there is no basis in fact for the widely held assumption that administrators who provide a high degree of professional leadership will have schools that are more 'productive' and staffs that enjoy higher morale, it would be a telling argument for abandoning the conception of the principal as one who plays a leadership role. But if there is empirical support for this common assumption, then to confine the principal to routine administrative tasks would be to eliminate a force conducive to improved teaching and learning. The positive relationship between EPL and teachers' morale, their professional performance, and the pupils' learning justifies the staff influence conception of the principalship and strategies to increase the principal's professional leadership. The findings, in short, offer empirical support for a leadership conception of the principal's role, and they undermine a major argument for abandoning it.

Gross and Herriott indicated that if EPL was to be a criterion in the selection of principals, certain characteristics should be considered. Those characteristics (1965:157) included "a high level of academic performance in college, a high order of interpersonal skill, motive of service, the willingness to commit off-duty time to their work, and relatively little seniority as teachers".

Foskett's study of twenty-two elementary principals revealed that a great deal of ambiguity existed, at least in one school district, between the way the principals viewed their role, their perceptions of how others (central office members, school board members, teachers, parents, and community leaders) viewed the principalship and how the others actually viewed the role. According to Foskett (1967:95):

The evidence suggests that the position is not clearly defined. In part, the principal is identified as an administrator and in part as a member of the teaching staff. Similarly, the principals sometimes see themselves as administrators and sometimes as members of the teaching staff. However, there is a tendency for the principals to see themselves as administrators more frequently than do the several populations of others. This ambiguity is heightened by a low level of agreement among the principals themselves and among others for a number of norms that appear to be critical.

A more extensive study of 291 elementary principals, representing every state, was conducted by Goldhammer, Becker, Withycombe, Doyel, Miller, Morgan, Deloretto, and Aldridge (1971) during in 1969. The researchers were able to distinguish between effective and ineffective principals according to the conditions of their schools. They labeled the effective schools, "beacons of brilliance", and characterized the ineffective schools as "potholes of pestilence".

In the "beacons of brilliance", the principals were

...charismatic leaders; they seem to instill enthusiasm in their teachers. The teaching staffs seem to be working as teams because their morale was high, their services extend beyond normal expectations. Teachers and principals, along with parents, constantly appraise the effectiveness of the schools in an attempt to devise new programs and strategies to overcome deficiencies. Programs of study are adaptable and emphasis in the instructional

program is placed on children's needs. Principals are confident they can provide relevant, purposive learning without having to lean on traditional crutches.

In direct contrast, the "potholes of pestilence" were characterized by (1972:2)

...weak leadership and official neglect. The buildings, dirty and in disrepair, are unwholesome environments for learning and child growth. The schools are poorly staffed and equipped. The morale of teachers and pupils is low; where control is maintained, fear is one of the essential strategies employed. Instructional programs are traditional, ritualistic, and poorly related to student needs. The schools are characterized by unenthusiasm, squalor, and ineffectiveness. The principals are just serving out their time.

Goldhammer's et al. findings were seemingly a direct indictment against the personnel management skills of the principals whose schools were labeled "potholes of pestilence". Those schools were a sharp contrast to the "beacons" where high expectations for performance, high morale and productivity were evident, and the principal was a key factor in the success of the school. The indictment was so strong that the researchers admonished preparation programs for administrators and proposed that such programs ban the perpetuation of "old-style" management techniques.

Two other findings of the study serve as clues to understanding the behavior of the principals, particularly the insecurities and inadequacies they expressed concerning their role and their ability to perform that role effectively. There was a prevalent belief on the part of the principals that they were "subprofessionals", a feeling fostered by the principals' perception that preferential treatment

was given to secondary principals in the forms of higher salaries, a larger share of resources, less interference in the operation of their schools, and more emphasis on secondary education. Another major problem cited by the principals was their inability to recruit and retain teachers because of low salary scales, high pupil-teacher ratios, and the location of some of their districts (1971:43). Other concerns seemed to be directly related to the nature of the job and teacher negotiations (1971:6):

The elementary school principal feels imposed on by the demands of central-office personnel; he feels alienated from his teaching staff and unjustly left out of the contract negotiations that determine his obligations to them; he feels helplessly bogged down with the daily duties of maintaining his school; and he is uncertain of his relative position in the district administrative structure and with respect to the teachers in his school.

Greenfield et al. further point out some of the discrepancies and inadequacies in the performance of the principals (1971:6):

...it may be that the elementary school principal avoids performing some of the duties he claims he should be handling...principals say they would like to have more time for the supervision of teachers; many principals, however, admit that they do not have the necessary skills to develop adequate supervisory programs within their buildings. Others say they would like to have more time for program planning and evaluation, but they assert that they have neither knowledge nor skill to determine how to involve teachers or how to get teachers to accept the results.

The most obvious discrepancies pertained to the personnel management skills of principals. Similar findings were repeated in later studies conducted on the principalship during the 1970s and the early 1980s. Those years produced some of the most intensive and revealing research on the principalship, particularly regarding the nature of the job and

the characteristics of the men and women who occupy the position. The next section describes, in general, the complexities of the principalship after the 1960s and, specifically, the problems surrounding the performance of the personnel function.

### A Complex Role

#### Factors that Influenced the Role

It seems redundant, but necessary, to indicate that the principalship after the 1960s was reminiscent of the changes of the greater social, political, and economic exigencies of the time, but it is true as it has been since the beginning of the principalship. The intensity of some of those factors and the extent of the challenges in personnel management for principals can best be demonstrated by three writers, who collectively, reflect the perceived plight of the present-day principal.

The Executive Director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (Pharis, 1975:7) concedes that some of the problems facing principals were not new. The evermounting paperwork, a result of increased bureaucratization, is certainly not a new problem. The Executive Director, however, believes that some of the problems are "children of the seventies". He explains:

Many of us who occupy the principalship were prepared and conditioned in an era when we had to scrounge to find teachers, desks and books for an ever expanding supply of students. RIF meant a band of heroes from Sigmund Romberg's 'Desert Song', not reduction in force. Temporary classrooms were the most permanent commodity in our lives. We couldn't imagine empty classrooms, much less closed schools. We certainly could not visualize, as I recently visited, a large school system in which every teacher

teacher was fully certified.

Ten years ago, grievance was a synonym for irritation. Today it is a complex procedure, and how grievances are administered is a major determinant in the decision-making process for many of us. In 1975, 72 percent of our members are working with teachers who are covered by a collectively negotiated contract....Tightly negotiated teacher contracts have caused us to become leery, lest a casual suggestion to a staff member become a confrontation, demanding a hearing and full documentation.

Knezevich (1975:394-395) attributes the complexities of the principalship to "the pressures on society in general and on education in particular". He describes those pressures:

The increasing pressure on the school to assume a more dynamic role in the amelioration of social injustices, the greater militancy and professionalism of teachers, the increased specialization of teachers, and the growing complexity of all educational institutions are modifying the nature of the principalship...more and more the principal is recognized as an executive or administrator and the principalship as a constellation of positions.

The age old concern and one of the greatest sources of ambiguity for the principalship has been the conflict over the degree of emphasis that should be placed on the instructional leader role versus the managerial role. Blumberg and Greenfield (1980:15-16) address that issue:

Expecting school principals to be both strong instructional leaders and effective school managers poses a dilemma which shows no sign of abating. It is heightened in the current conflict among principals themselves regarding whether it is more appropriate to align themselves as a separate employee group or to identify with either teachers or superintendents at the bargaining table. Increasing violence and vandalism in our nation's schools, mandates from federal and state agencies to service special categories of students in particular ways, and pressures to increase teaching effectiveness in basic skill areas present principals with organizational and educational challenges of unprecedented magnitude....Principals frequently are expected to be all things to all people, to do all things and do them well.

It is evident that principals throughout the country were faced

with challenges unparalleled in educational administration. The groundswell of discontent with education by the public, demands for efficiency and, particularly, effectiveness came at a time when principals were experiencing what they believed to be an erosion of their management prerogatives. Laws regarding tenure rights for teachers, grievance procedures, discrimination protections through federal and state laws, and collective bargaining were some of the legal constraints partially responsible for a change in the "fire at will" management prerogatives of the past. Other factors, such as a highly mobile teacher workforce, resulting from reduction in force throughout many parts of the country, and a collection of teachers with varying backgrounds and values provided the basis for dissidence. Principals were finding that the old ways of managing were ineffective because teachers were no longer marching to the tune of an autocratic style of leadership. Teachers were part of a new generation of employees who demanded rather than asked, questioned rather than accepted, and served as a constant challenge to their principals.

#### A Comparison of Roles

The complexity of the principal's role is amplified when compared by Drucker (1964:157) to the business administrator's role:

I know of no job that has so many publics to satisfy, so many bosses to answer to. There is the superintendent and the school board and behind them the local governments, and the voters and the taxpayers. There is the community at large with its interest in the schools--informed and otherwise. There is the faculty and the nonprofessional staff. And of course, there are the youngsters for whose benefit all this supposedly is going on.

I know of no job, moreover, that has so many different if not conflicting demands made on it. The school administrator is expected to be an educational leader and a leader in his community. But he is also expected to be a manager, working out budgets and staying with them, hiring, placing and managing people, both faculty and staff, bringing the parents close to the school-but not so close that they can interfere; and, satisfying a host of professional bodies, each with a different idea of what the school administrator's job should be and how it should be appraised. To an outsider like myself, who is more used to the comparative simplicity of the job of the executive and administrator in business or in government, this appears an almost impossible assignment in its complexity, in the demands it has to satisfy and in the groups, interests and constituents, each of whom consider the school 'their' school and the school administrator their representative agent.

Drucker's comparison of roles serves as an indicator that the functions for which principals are responsible have changed little over the past sixteen years, except perhaps in the intensity of and the emphasis on certain functions of the job.

#### Functions of the Principalship

The functions, the tasks, responsibilities, and activities for which principals are responsible have remained the same for a number of years. Most writers (Campbell, Corbally, and Ramseyer, 1969; Hencley, McClearly, and McGrath, 1970; and, Lipham and Hoeh, 1974) agree on the functions associated with the principalship. According to Lipham and Hoeh (1974) there are five major functional areas:

1. The Instructional Program
2. Staff Personnel Services
3. Student Personnel Services
4. Financial and Physical Resources
5. School-Community Relationships



Recent research findings (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980; Leithwood and Montgomery, 1982; Martin and Willower, 1981; Kmetz and Willower, 1982) have shown that the functions are not that different within the principalship ranks; the differences lie more with the size, level, and location of the school and with the individual competencies that principals bring to the role.

Lipham and Hoeh (1974:4) stress that in order for principals to be effective leaders in the functional areas, they must be well versed in the foundational theories which include: general systems theory, social systems theory, values theory, organizational theory, role theory, decision theory, and leadership theory. Some of the studies on the principalship (Wolcott, 1973; Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980) have revealed an almost total absence of a theoretical framework for the operation of their schools on the part of the principals studied.

#### The Nature Of The Job

When one analyzes the day-to-day work life of the principal, the fast-paced, complex, "busy person syndrome" becomes apparent. Cornett (1982:1) provides one writer's description of the nature of the job:

It is characterized by brevity of tasks of incredible variety and fragmentation....Principals have an enormous number of brief interactions. The average tasks that they do take less than two minutes. In some studies, up to 80 percent of a principal's activities last less than two minutes...there is little time for planning....You have different cognitive requirements. Some tasks take simple memory, others take creative problem-solving skills. When you combine that with the fragmented tasks or interrupted tasks, you get a complex role.

Wolcott's (1973) ethnographic study of Ed Bell, an elementary principal described the numerous "face-to-face" encounters Ed experienced during his work day. Those encounters consumed about sixty-five percent of a typical work day (1973:88):

The greatest part of a principal's time is spent in an almost endless series of encounters, from the moment he arrives at school until the moment he leaves. Most of these encounters are face-to-face, tending to keep the principalship a highly personal role.

Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) were able to conclude from their study of eight effective principals that a "setting of immediacy" permeated the principalship at the school level while the affect of the larger school system on the principal's behavior is "relatively diffuse and nonimmediate" (1980:235-236):

...the role demands placed on the principal by members of the school building system--teachers, students, custodians, parents--are frequent and varied during the course of a day, and call for quick responses. Principals rarely have the luxury of prolonged contemplation of the actions they take during a school day.irate parents cannot be told to come back in a day or two because the principal has other things to do. Nor can a teacher who is upset because his/her classroom is out of control be put off with 'go get a good night's sleep and it will be better tomorrow'. To the contrary, the principal is pressured or expected to act immediately, even if the action involves something as simple as listening.

For principals in a large urban school system, time was a scarce commodity for a demanding role (Crowson and Porter-Gehrie, 1980:51) and days filled with a variety of tasks and interactions:

Time...is a scarce commodity...that must be shared with, and parceled out among, a rather wide array of persons. The principal represents the school to parents and community; is approached throughout each day by teachers and pupils; is at the beck and call of central office personnel; is in frequent consultation with janitors, clerks, assistant principals; and is, additionally,

available to social workers, teacher aides, attendance and security officers, cafeteria workers, reading consultants, nurses, psychologists, and many others who add to the institutional fabric of an urban school.

In his or her communications with this array of individuals, the principal frequently receives the problems, issues, and requests that few others can solve. To the principal's attention come the instances of parental displeasure with the actions of a classroom teacher; the adjudication of turf battles between faculty members; the sudden crises of student disruption or student injury; the difficult process of dismissing an incompetent, albeit tenured, teacher; and the worrisome problem of how to increase pupil attendance and achievement.

Despite advanced planning, how principals spent their time was determined more by the needs and expectations of others than by the "principal's own vision, long-range planning, and priorities" (Gorton and McIntyre, 1978:30). When asked about "time-wasters", principals identified district office meetings, too much paper work, and problems referred to the principal that should have been resolved by some other person in the school as their greatest time wasters (Gorton and McIntyre, 1978:27).

Two companion studies, one of five high school principals (Martin and Willower, 1981) and the other of five elementary school principals (Kmetz and Willower, 1982) revealed that the principals' activities exhibited the intensity, variety, and fragmentation typical of administrative work. The researchers, in both studies, used Mintzberg's structured observation technique to study the managerial behavior of principals. The study of high school principals revealed that principals paralleled private sector management in a variety of ways (Martin and Willower, 1981:79-82):

1. They worked an average of 42.2 hours on the job each week with an additional weekly average of eleven hours of work in the evening.
2. They engaged in 17.7 different tasks per hour; changing activities every three to four minutes.
3. They engaged in a wide variety of tasks that were brief in duration and were frequently interrupted. At least 81.4% of the activities lasted from one to four minutes. 50% of all activities were interrupted.
4. They initiated ten times as many verbal contacts as they did written outputs. They preferred face-to-face encounters which comprised 72.2% of the encounters.
5. They had a tendency to engage in pressing and current situations that could be quickly completed. They preferred to undertake and complete tasks as rapidly as possible.
6. The contact network of the principals was mostly (92.6%) with the members of their school.
7. They maintained "sectional control"; that is, control of their schools without having full organizational control.

Two other findings were interesting. Although the literature often depicts the principalship as being highly stressful, the principals were described as "non-beleagured". Regarding the instructional role, it is significant that the principals devoted only 17.4% of their time to instructional matters. The researchers explained the role assumed by the principals (1981:83-84):

They (principals) served as consultants for and evaluators of the teaching staff, and they performed logistical and organizational maintenance functions related to curricular articulation. However, the majority of the routine education of youngsters...was clearly the province of the teaching staff...the principals deferred to the teachers in technical matters.

To the extent that instructional leadership required the possession of an institutional focus, the principals performed this function. In fact, they were frequently the only individuals within the school who had the overall perspective to enable them to do so. However, their instructional leadership role component did not include active instructional or curricular involvement. Although the principals retained final authority over these matters, they chose to exercise it in a passive fashion.

Kmetz and Willower's (1982:72-76) findings on the elementary prin-

cipals were similar, yet different in some respects from high school principals. The differences were stressed by the researchers (1982: 74):

To summarize the main differences, the elementary principals engaged in fewer activities (14.7), had fewer interruptions, and less correspondence. They also had fewer scheduled meetings, but spent more time on planning in such meetings. They had more contacts with superiors and with parents, and spent more time on the schools' instructional programs and less on extra-curricular activities.

#### Major Problems For Principals

Numerous studies regarding principals identify aspects of principals' jobs that are stressful for principals or are perceived to be major problems by them. The research findings that have implications for the personnel function are included in this section.

Goldhammer et al. (1971) found that "recruitment and retention" of teachers was a major problem for the national sample of 291 principals. They also identified feelings of inadequacy on behalf of those principals when faced with the tasks of supervising teachers and trying to involve teachers in such matters as program planning and evaluation (1971:6).

Koff et al. (1979) set out to assess the magnitude of stress induced by forty-eight stress-related events through a national survey sample of members of the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. Their findings were revealing. The most common cause of stress for principals involved events such as forced resignations, staff reduc-

tions, teacher evaluations, and interpersonal conflicts (1979:7). The second highest group of stressors were those involving threats to the security and job status of principals. Of those events, involuntary transfer to another principalship was the third most highly ranked of all forty-eight stressors; other events included criticism in the press, legal action against their schools, and disagreements with superiors. Although the researchers did not indicate any interrelationship between the perceived teacher conflict threats and those of physical or status threat to the principal, it is apparent that in personnel problems both sets of stressors could come into play and, as a result, provide a double jeopardy for principals. Conflict with teachers was more stressful for elementary principals than for secondary principals. As the result of their study, Koff and others raise several questions regarding perceived teacher conflict situations. "Is it the unpleasantness of having to give some 'bad news'? Is it the frequency of occurrence? Is it that such situations cannot be adequately anticipated and planned for?" (1981:9).

Manera and Wright (1981) provide some insight into the first question raised by Koff. When fifty-seven secondary principals (a few assistant principals were included) from New Mexico were tested to determine their high and low stressors, the greatest stressor for the principals was having to make decisions that affected the lives of staff members they knew. Those decisions were based on performance evaluations and/or other pertinent information about the staff members.

The second greatest stressor pertained to evaluation of staff members; specifically, judging the performance of staff members and helping them to increase their level of performance. Their study does provide, at least, an indication that confronting a teacher and having to make decisions regarding the teacher's future was difficult for principals. The researchers did not provide sufficient information about the second stressor that would clarify why the "helping" aspect was stressful.

Gorton and McIntyre's study (1978) of sixty effective principals identified "incompetent and undedicated" teachers as the greatest "irritation" of those principals (1978:60,63). The principals readily acknowledged concern that they "ineffectively handled" problems pertaining to teacher performance. The study does not, however, provide insights into "why" the principals felt inadequate in such matters.

Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) discovered three major problems that had a negative emotional impact on the eight principals in their study. Those problems involved: (1) the exceeding difficulties and frustrations inherent in getting rid of tenured teachers, (2) the feelings of power and/or powerlessness regarding their prerogatives, and (3) the behavioral constraints placed on principals because of the role expectations held for them by others. The constraints of tenure had a negative impact on principals who used such terms as "bad scene", "weary and painful", and "emotional trauma" as they described the long and arduous process of documenting and working toward the termination of teachers' contracts. When faced with such

such a task, principals said they saw themselves "...caught between 'a rock and a hard place', feeling damned by others if they do, and damning themselves if they don't" (1980:217).

Power was determined by Blumberg and Greenfield to be important to the principals, not simply for the sake of power, but in order for them to be effective (1980:221-222):

...none of them seemed concerned at all with self-aggrandizement, or that their organizational life was one big win-lose game, although they certainly have won and lost their share of battles. What really is at the heart of things seems to be two factors. First, they have a notion of the kind of school they want to develop and, second, they need to have the power to do it, relatively unfettered by external constraints. They are activists and as such, quite simply, must have the freedom to act. Without that kind of freedom it seems as though they wilt. Power is, indeed, an energizer for them and if they don't have as much of it as they need, they lose part of their sense of being.

The role expectations for principals to be "professionals", always rational, able to keep their feelings and emotions under control, placed a constraint on the principals. As the researchers point out, "...principals...are expected to behave with more decorum than their private sector counterparts" (1980:222). Although their jobs were emotionally taxing, many of the principals felt they were alone in dealing with their emotions. The researchers warn that principals who are always providing help for their staffs should be able to turn to others for help, if they are to remain successful in their jobs.

Sarason (1971) describes a major dilemma for principals in that they want "to be and feel influential". The principal's dilemma begins when (1971:130-131):

...he realizes that words and power, far from guaranteeing



intended outcomes, may be ineffectual and even produce the opposite of what he desires. When he encounters hostility and resistance to his recommendations or ideas for change, (e.g., with a teacher) he feels he has one of two alternative means of response: assert his authority or withdraw from the fray. The usual consequence of either response is to widen the psychological gap and to increase the feelings of isolation of those involved....The dilemma...is further complicated when he has to deal with people who have a different type of expertise and with whom the principal is not in the role of leader...His dilemma... is further aggravated by the fact that often proposed changes for his school do not come from him but from sources in the system ('downtown')...regardless of whether or not the principal likes the proposed changes he is in large part responsible for implementing those changes in fact and in spirit.

#### Coping Mechanisms

In recent years, researchers have been able to identify particular coping mechanisms utilized by principals as a means of meeting the demands of an often ambiguous and stressful work environment. Crowson and Porter-Gehrie (1980) found that principals in a large city school system deal with problems in a manner similar to Lipsky's "street-level bureaucracy" theory. Lipsky defined street-level bureaucrats as "those men and women who, in their face-to-face encounters with citizens, 'represent' government to the people"(Crowson and Porter-Gehrie, 1980:46). Street-level bureaucrats work in an uncertain and complex environment characterized by inadequate resources, role ambiguity and conflict, and physical and psychological challenges to authority. In order to deal with such an environment, street-level bureaucrats develop coping mechanisms, usually in the form of "simplifications and routines" (1980: 46). The researchers describe the coping mechanisms employed by the principals when dealing with (1) time inadequacies, (2) enrollment

decline, (3) disorder, and (4) community expectations. The coping mechanisms for time inadequacies and disorder will be described because of their relevance to the personnel function.

Two of the coping mechanisms for time inadequacies were "on the spot decision-making" and "spotlighting". Because of the intensity of the principals' work day--many activities lasting less than one minute, with the majority being less than four minutes in duration--principals spent a major portion of their day moving about the school, observing, monitoring, checking, correcting, and always making certain that things ran smoothly. As a result of the fast pace, principals' decision-making was (1980:51):

...packed into episodic intervals of just a few minutes--very often in brief encounters with other persons, sometimes clips of conversations held almost literally on the run in corridors, or while moving about the outer office. Decisions were made on-the-spot--there was little time for introspection, for worrying about the implications of choices made, for becoming preoccupied with any one troublesome issue, or for gathering added information.

"Spotlighting" was defined as a "tendency toward decisions that simplify a complex situation by responding to one aspect while letting other aspects drop" (1980:51), thus allowing problematic aspects to fade away and disappear. Two ways of accomplishing "spotlighting" were demonstrated by the principals: ignoring or playing down problems in order to direct attention away from potentially explosive situations, and failing to take cognizance of veiled threats from staff members, students, or parents. An example of the latter was given by the researchers (1980:52):

We observed a principal follow this path during a teacher conference. The principal reminded a teacher, who directed several important extracurricular activities, that she still was responsible for routine matters in her regular classroom. For instance, the teacher was expected to turn in lesson plans like all other teachers. The teacher, who had yet to hand in a single lesson plan, responded by saying that she was much more involved in her classroom teaching than in her activities work. Consequently, if the principal thought that her classroom work was falling off, the teacher would just have to stop doing the extra activity work and concentrate on her social studies classes. The principal did not comment on what seemed a poorly veiled threat from the teacher to abandon the activities program, simply concluding that interview with the restated comment that he expected the teacher to turn in some lesson plans on Monday.

The principals' capacity to keep order was determined to be critical to the status and authority of the principals within their schools. One way of coping with disorder was to have a daily routine of patrolling the school--timing the patrols to coincide with intervals between class periods in order to be visible to faculty and students. Besides being visible in the school, principals also employed another coping mechanism, "closing the ring", which was a means of closing off any matters that threatened a principal's image of authority. Examples of such activities include (1980:59) (1) protecting staff from the consequences of their own disciplinary errors, (2) absolving the school from any responsibility for events that occurred outside, and (3) anticipating threatening situations.

Crowson and Porter-Gehrie (1980:63-65) describe four coping mechanisms employed by principals to cope with their ambiguous and often contradictory roles. The first mechanism involved "redefinition of the supervisory role", whereby the principals recognized their inability

to fulfill the instructional leadership role. If they spent the required amount of time observing in the classrooms, the principals would be unable to take care of the other demands on the position; therefore, they redefined their role to suit how they actually spent their time. For example, while some principals attempted to "weed out" their incompetent teachers, others redirected much of the time that would be required for such a task to other supervisory duties which related "in some way to the supervisory role expectation but have a better chance for some payoff" (1980:64). The second mechanism was called "expanding the role to meet responsibility". Limited in their control over support personnel, such as janitors, repairmen, social workers, and others who cross organizational boundaries, principals found themselves negotiating for services and resolving conflicts between the faculty and resource personnel. The third mechanism mechanism involved "keeping control of decision making". In order to keep control, principals "appeared to delegate very little responsibility to subordinates" (1980:65). Principals were always careful to "cover their rears". The fourth and last mechanism was to "blame downtown", an outlet they appeared to take delight in as they shared the "...snafus, contradictions and mistakes which emanated from...the district offices" (1980:65)

Blumberg and Greenfield (1980:198) found that principals used coping mechanisms because their work situation was ambiguous and likely to produce psychological stress. The principals seemed to cope well

with their circumstances by maintaining "a proactive confrontation rather than a reactive avoidance strategy toward the problems they encounter" (1980:198). Blumberg and Greenfield speculate that proactive strategies are more likely to be used if principals have a high degree of interpersonal competence and if the "character of the organizational situation is sufficiently ambiguous to permit reinterpretation and channeling of role demands" (1980:198).

Gorton and McIntyre (1978) found that stress was not necessarily a major problem for the principals in their study. Most of the principals, when confronted with stressful situations, turned to physical exercise as a means of dealing with stress; few principals coped by talking their problems over with others.

### The Effective Principal

Research findings in recent years have rekindled an interest in determining the characteristics of those men and women who make a difference in whether or not their schools are successful. Although numerous studies were conducted to study "effective" schools, the findings of such studies identified the principal as a key element in the success of those schools (Leithwood and Montgomery, 1982; Shoemaker and Fraser, 1981; Cohen, 1981; Miller, 1981; Strother, 1983; and, Persell and Cookson, Jr., 1982). Other studies were specifically designed for the study of principals; some studies focused only on principals who were recognized as effective. The findings of those latter studies will be included in this section.

In order to gain perspective as to the uniqueness of the characteristics attributed to effective principals, Drucker's description of effective executives serves as a comparison (1967:22):

Among the effective executives I have known there are extroverts and aloof, retiring men, some even morbidly shy. Some are eccentrics, others painfully correct conformists. Some are fat and some are lean. Some are worriers, some are relaxed. Some drink quite heavily, others are total abstainers. Some are men of great charm and warmth, some have no more personality than a frozen mackerel...some are scholars, others almost unlettered...there are people who use logic and analysis and others who rely mainly on perception and intuition.

Although diversity exists among effective executives, Drucker contends that they do have the following in common (1967:4):

What all have in common is the practices that make effective whatever they are. And these practices are the same...effectiveness, in other words, is a habit; that is a complex of practices. And practices can always be learned.

The individuality and diverseness of effective principals was obvious in Blumberg and Greenfield's study of eight men and women.

As a result of their study, the researchers concluded (1980:252):

...it became clear to us that each of these men and women brought something different with them, a unique quality, as they approached and dealt with the problems of their respective schools. We were able to distinguish among these principals in terms of the idiosyncratic perspectives each of them held toward life generally and their work situation in particular. While many of the problems they faced were similar in type and magnitude, the variations in the perspectives they held appeared to be the major factor relating to the differences in their approaches to the job, in their conceptions of what was critically related to effectiveness in the principalship. The central life interests of these eight men and women were to a great extent realized in the world of work, their principalships.

The eight principals were distinguished from one another by descriptors associated with their dominant work orientation. Thus, they were re-

ferred to as The Politician, The Humanist, The Broker, The Catalyst, The Juggler, The Organizer, The Rationalist, and The Helper. Blumberg and Greenfield were able to identify some of the commonalities, or the threads that shaped the fabric of their effectiveness. The five major strands were (1980:256-257):

1. A high level of energy and a willingness to work long hours on a continuous basis. These men and women consistently spent very long hours each day on job-related activity. Some spent as much as fifteen to eighteen hours, on a regular basis, at particular times during the school day.
2. Extremely well-developed expressive abilities. All of these principals had very well-developed interpersonal skills and were able to communicate effectively in face-to-face interaction with a diverse range of individuals and groups.
3. A proactive approach in response to the requirements of the situation they faced as principals. All tended to take the initiative and not wait for the lead from others, except as this would help them achieve their objectives. They were all clearly leaders who felt comfortable and were effective beings in charge of things. This is not to say they did everything themselves--they were, however, clearly adept at 'getting the ball rolling'.
4. All of these principals were very good listeners and observers. Their antennae were always out and highly sensitive to what was occurring both in and around their schools. They were continuously collecting data about their situation.
5. Finally, all of them were very skilled at analyzing and determining the requirements of their school situations, and evaluating alternative courses of action. This was, like their disposition to collect information as they moved through their work world, a continuous process. They were constantly sorting, categorizing, and interrelating phenomena bearing on the principalship.

Gorton and McIntyre's (1978) study of sixty effective principals was the second of a three part study of secondary principals. They summarized the findings of the three studies in order to present the patterns of behavior that characterized effective principals (1979:15-31):

1. They were hardworking, dedicated individuals, concerned about students and involved in improving opportunities for learning in their schools.
2. They were people oriented. They seemed to understand different kinds of people, knew how to motivate them, and knew how to deal effectively with their problems.
3. They approached problems directly, set high standards, established an open and accepting climate, and worked to develop new practices in the school. They moved actively toward the solution of problems, involving the people affected by the problem.
4. They controlled their job responsibilities and were able to spend more time with personnel, program development, and school management.
5. Although they were confronted with the same constraints as other principals--inadequate resources, master contracts, incompetent teachers, federal and state regulations, interruptions in work schedules, and lack of adequate numbers of administrative assistants--they did not feel as constrained as others and saw the central office as supportive.
6. They felt their schools were better staffed. They felt less constrained in the area of interpersonal relationships with immediate associates--teachers, students, and central office.
7. They tended to be initiators and/or implementors, and considered themselves to be change agents.
8. As decision makers, they included others in planning, but also guided and monitored.
9. They placed a high value on cultivating good communications with students.
10. They actively engaged parents.
11. They displayed a variety of leadership styles.

Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) summarize from their research findings certain characteristics that are essential if principals desire to be effective. In order for principals to be effective, they must (1) be willing to take risks, (2) be able to judiciously use the human and technical resources, and (3) understand, as well as be able to use, the opportunities for change inherent in the position (1980:269). Those conclusions follow similar conclusions reached by Levinson (1971) regarding effective managers. Levinson (1971) contends that managers



who are effective reach that level of success because they have (1) the need to manage, (2) the need for power, and (3) the capacity for empathy. Those competencies are as vital for school principals as they are for managers in the private sector. As Greenfield and Blumberg (1980:269) point out, "Being a nice person just isn't enough". Principals must possess the desire to manage; thereby, accepting the responsibility for the performance of teachers. Unable to rely solely upon the authority of the position, principals, as managers, need to "learn that the real source of their power is in their own knowledge and skill, and the strength of their own personalities" (Levinson, 1971:70-71). Only then, are they "...able to exercise their traditional authority" (Levinson, 1971:71).

#### Summary

A historical overview of the principalship is the story of a position in constant flux, responding continuously to a changing society and the demands that those changes bring to bear on the educational system. If the 1960s and early 1970s can be described as periods of uncertainty for the principalship, the late 1970s and early 1980s can be recognized as the period when the principalship came into its own, as it gained recognition as a key position in the determination of effective schools.

Research studies conducted during the 1960s emphasized the need for the principals to assume a leadership role, with an emphasis on management of personnel resources for performance, morale, and produc-

tivity. Studies during the 1970s and early 1980s revealed insights into the nature of the principalship, and focused on those characteristics exhibited by effective principals.

Faced by ever present societal demands for accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness at a time when the economy was on the downswing, coupled with constraints being placed upon their management prerogatives, principals were faced with many challenges during the 1970s and 1980s. During that period, research findings revealed that the nature of the principalship was reminiscent of a rapidly changing society. Time was a scarce commodity for principals who lived a fast-paced, complex, and highly personal role, characterized by brevity of tasks, continuous face-to-face encounters, which often required on-the-spot decision making. Effective principals were described as diverse, proactive, people-oriented, risk takers, who were, for the most part, non-beleaguered and able to deal with the highly energized and demanding job. Another common characteristic of principals was their major stressor--dealing with teacher performance and evaluation, particularly when interpersonal conflicts and forced resignation were eminent. The second greatest stressor was perceived to be a threat to the physical status and/or job security of principals. In order to deal with their highly demanding and stressful jobs, principals were observed employing various coping mechanisms that enabled them to maintain control in often ambiguous roles.

CHAPTER III  
FIELD RESEARCH: METHODOLOGY  
AND PROCEDURES

[The] ...task of scientific study is to lift the veils that cover the area of group life that one proposes to study... no theorizing, however ingenious and no observance of scientific protocol, however meticulous, are substitutes for developing a familiarity with what is actually going on in the sphere of life under study.

Blumer (1969:39)

This chapter is devoted to a description of the qualitative research known as field research, particularly the methodology of participant observation, as it was utilized in this study. The rationale for the research methodology is presented, but the researcher does not enter into a comparative analysis of qualitative versus quantitative research methodologies; both are vital to the task of scientific study which strives to "lift the veils that cover the area of group life that one proposes to study".

Definition And Rationale

Definition

Newcomers to the field of qualitative research can readily become confused by the synonymous usage of the terms ethnography, field research, and participant observation. The three terms share a commonality in that they involve a study of people in their natural

setting. Beyond this distinction, the terms differ in the degree of intensity and in the scope of the study undertaken. In an attempt to prevent any misunderstanding on the part of the reader, a clarification of the terms as they relate to this research project will be made.

Ethnography is characteristically a holistic, cross-cultural, inquiry-process approach used primarily by the anthropologists to study cultures external to American society. In recent years, an interest has been generated in considering ethnography for the study of schooling in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the more recent studies in education have reflected a smaller scale, or "microethnographic" approach (Smith and Geoffrey, 1968), which has enabled researchers, who were not trained as anthropologists, to pursue studies under the guise of ethnography. Wolcott (1975:112), labeling his study of an elementary principal as an ethnographic "approach", justified his terminology on the basis that his study, one small fragment of the total picture, contributed to the total knowledge of what will one day be known about the culture of a school. Following this line of reasoning, this research project could have been considered to be an ethnographic approach to studying one part of the principal's "world". For the sake of clarity, however, and to avoid mislabeling and thus possible offense to anthropologists and/or sociologists, this researcher chose not to define this study as an ethnography.

Ambiguity in the research literature exists on an extensive scale between the terms field research<sup>2</sup> and participant observation.<sup>3</sup> Researchers often attribute the same qualities to field research and participant observation.<sup>4</sup> A clearer delineation between the two terms was made for this study.

Field research may be characterized as a blend of methods and techniques used to study people and events in a natural setting. A very broad definition of field research is given by Schatzman and Strauss (1973:7):

...an umbrella of activity beneath which any technique may be used for gaining the desired information, and for processes of thinking about the information.

Field researchers employ various techniques to investigate and study people in their natural setting. One of the primary techniques practiced by researchers, and the technique utilized in this study was participant observation. Denzin (1978:183) defines participant observation as a field strategy that "simultaneously combines document analyses, interviewing, direct participation and observation, and introspection".

There is another aspect of participant observation that is implied in Denzin's definition--a researcher must assume a role when observing people in situ. The researcher assumed the role of "participant as an observer", as defined by Lutz (1969:108):

The participant as an observer is a person who, by chance or intent, is entitled to a role in the system he intends to study. He does not have to be invited in; he is in. One may say that he occupies a role that would exist whether or not he was there.

For the purpose of this study, the term, participant as an observer, was shortened to participant-observer.

### Rationale

Field research, which utilizes participant observation as the primary means of collecting and analyzing data, was the appropriate methodology for this study for a number of reasons. Field research is a very old and tested method of studying people; a method that possesses a unique quality of universality because it has been used by anthropologists, sociologists, and political scientists to study primitive cultures, the American Indian, street corner gangs, hospitals, asylums, courts, slums, communities, deviant behavior, cults, labor movements, and schools.<sup>5</sup> Studies in the field of education have included school systems, interorganizational systems, schools, classrooms, curricula, school boards, and special programs.<sup>6</sup>

Direct observation and participation by the researcher was found to be especially suitable for the study of attitudes and behaviors of the principals in Ridgemont School System. Direct observation allowed the researcher to observe and record nuances of attitudes and behaviors that might not have otherwise been anticipated or recorded. Griffiths (1959:34) recognized this attribute of observation when he wrote:

...if we are to gain the information which will give us descriptions of the behavior of individuals in organizations, then we must abandon our research approach of asking people to check a blank or to write down on a piece of paper the way they perceive themselves...We need descriptions of the behavior of administra-

tors and others as they work and live in their organizations.

The descriptive quality of field work is best exemplified by Malinowski's (Lutz and Iannaconne, 1969:99) writings:

If you want to know him (the Trobriand Islander), you must meet him in his yam gardens, among his palm groves or on his taro fields. You must see him digging his black or brown soil among the outcrops of dead coral and building the fence which surrounds his garden with a 'magical wall' of prismatic-structures and triangular supports. You must follow him when, in the cool of the day, he watches the seed rise and develop within the precincts of the magical wall, which at first gleams like gold among the green of the new growth and then shows bronzed or grey under the rich garlands of yam foliage.

Although this researcher could not hope to achieve the poetic adeptness that Malinowski's writing demonstrates, there is much to be gained from his message in the above passage. Malinowski's reference to "know" is deeply ingrained in the nature of field work.

Lofland (1971:1) addresses the significance of "knowing" and "knowing about". His thoughts are closely related to Malinowski's theme:

A significant feature of being a modern person--of living in what we call the modern world--is to know about a wide variety of other human beings but not to know them. To know about a category of human beings is to have it represented by second parties that such a category exists...But we can also know people through our own direct, face-to-face association with them, extending over some significant period of time.

Babbie (1979:227) considers the depth of understanding that a researcher obtains to be the chief strength of field research.

So as not to overemphasize the observation aspect of field research, it must be stressed that data collection was not limited to a single process. Field research allows the incorporation of

multiple sources of data. The use of multiple sources of data, or triangulation (Denzin, 1978:291-307), allowed for internal consistency. Another major strength of the research methodology is its flexibility. Especially beneficial in face-to-face encounters, the researcher, not bound by rigid methodology, was able to change tactics and approaches when necessary. Not obligated by a preconceived set of hypotheses, the researcher was able to modify the design of the study as the circumstances dictated. This open-ended flexibility allowed events to flow a natural course.

### Participant Observation In This Study

#### Participant Observation

Participant observation was used as the data gathering strategy for this case study in once school system and incorporated information from observations of people and events, interviews and conversations with the people in the setting, documents, and introspection.<sup>7</sup> The researcher utilized the role of participant observer.

#### The Role of the Researcher

Observing in situ implies that one must have access to the desired research setting and that one must assume a role within that setting. Junker (1972:iii), perhaps more so than any other writer in the field, captures the essence of observing people in their natural setting:

...finding them where they are, staying with them in some role which, while acceptable to them, will allow both intimate observation of certain parts of their behavior, and reporting it in



ways useful to social science but not harmful to those observed. The simplicity of his writing belies the difficulties apparent in gaining entry into a desired setting and finding a role that is acceptable.

The researcher enjoyed a unique advantage in that she did not have to gain entry into Ridgemont County School System; she was already a member of the system, occupying the official role of Director of Personnel. She had been a member of the school system in a variety of roles since 1964, when she was first employed as a classroom teacher. After teaching fifth and sixth grade students for four years, she was offered the position of Supervisor of Paraprofessionals, a position that required the recruitment, selection and training of a new type of employee, the teacher aide. Five years later, she applied for and was appointed to the position of Director of Elementary Personnel, a position she held for almost five years. Then, as the result of organizational changes, she became the Director of Personnel for the school system in July 1979. For the purposes of this study of the Ridgemont principals, she assumed the research role of participant-observer, which was described earlier.

The advantages of the researcher over an "outsider" are evident. First of all, she was known, and her trustworthiness was recognized by the administration and the principals. Over the years, she had strived to establish a trust relationship with the principals and others within the school system. Secondly, she occupied an "official"

role in the school system. Unlike a hospital, a community, or a nightclub where size and structure allow one to assume various roles, even that of a "spy", a school system is limited in the number of roles that are available to an "outsider". An "outsider" is therefore conspicuous and must strive to become a member. Wolcott (1970:118), during his two-year study of one elementary school principal, felt accepted generally by everyone except the superintendent, who always seemed aware of his presence. Whyte's acceptance (Roberts and Adin-sanya, 1976:227-237) into the community of Cornerville was dependent in part upon "Doc". Whyte, a stranger in an Italian slum, also relied heavily upon "Doc" for knowledge of the ways of the community. As a member of the Ridgemont School System, the researcher did not have to rely upon an informant like "Doc". Thirdly, and perhaps the most important advantage, the nature of the topic under study would have prohibited an "outsider" from gaining entry. Personnel matters are, for the most part, conducted behind "closed doors", thus allowing for the security of the employee and the administrator. There is no evidence that Wolcott (1973), who was a "shadow" to Ed Bell, ever participated in personnel matters.

Donning the role of participant-observer was not a simple task. Comfortable with her official role, the researcher found guidance for her role as an observer from two writers, Glen Jacobs and Elliot Eisner. Both writers described the skills that an observer must possess. Jacobs (1970:7) portrays participant observation as a "gate

to knowledge". Passage through that gate, however, does not guarantee knowledge:

What happens when one enters that gate depends upon his abilities and interrelationships as an observer. He must be able to see, to listen, and to feel sensitively the social interactions of which he becomes a part. He must be able to grow with his experiences. He must question time and again whether he has perceived enough and whether his understandings are as accurate as he can make them. He must be able to understand his own impact upon the social situation he studies and what influences other participants and the situation have upon him.

Eisner (1979:xiv-xv), writing nine years later, emphasizes the analytical skills required of an observer:

The inquirer needs to know when to shift purpose, or focus, how to recognize what is real and what is feigned, how to interpret the meaning of the events observed, and what to make of them from an educational point of view. The task is one that requires not only a tremendous degree of sensitivity but an ability to understand and apply social theory to the phenomena being observed. One needs a high toleration for complexity and an ability to synthesize material that comes from various fields.

The role, participant-observer, required the researcher to live two roles simultaneously throughout the study. Her official role entailed job responsibilities that could not be avoided or compromised; the role had always been a demanding and fast paced one. Somewhat apprehensive about the observer role, the researcher read extensively in the field, ultimately realizing that there was no prescribed format for conducting such studies. Integrating all of the readings, she developed a framework, incorporating the suggestions and related experiences of recognized writers in the field, including Schatzman and Strauss (1973), Lutz and Iannaccone (1969), Becker (1970), Bogdan (1972), Junker (1972), Lofland (1971), and Denzin (1978).

The skills required for the two roles were very similar. The researcher's official role called for investigative skills very similar to those employed by her in the observer role. The complementary nature of the skills actually allowed the two roles to merge at times. As the researcher performed both roles, time became a precious commodity. At the completion of the normal work day, the researcher spent evening hours and then weekends transcribing tapes, analyzing data, and reading in the different disciplines.

#### Collection and Analysis of Data

Before commenting on the method of data collection, it seems appropriate to define the term, data, as it applied to this study. Junker's definition (1972:3) is perhaps the most comprehensive and relevant:

Data are facts based upon information. They are summaries of real life phenomena...Information is the record of 'life in the raw'...Information consists of what is and can be recorded of all the things people do and say.

Although no uniform method exists, several writers (Smith, 1979), Bogdan (1972), Lutz and Iannacone (1969), and Lofland (1971) have provided systems for collecting, recording and analyzing data. The procedures used in this study were a synthesis of those systems.

#### Field Notes and Other Sources of Data

Field notes comprised the majority of the information. Field notes were accurate, detailed recordings of the "life in the raw". Early in the study, the researcher found it impossible to take copious

notes as she interacted in her official role; therefore, she relied heavily on the tape recorder. She found the tape recorder to be especially useful for recording as she drove to and from locations. That seemed to be the best time (when it was quiet) to reflect upon and think about what had occurred during the day or about the study in general.

The tapes were later transcribed and typed. Transcribing the notes became a very time consuming task; one that the researcher chose to do personally because of the confidentiality of the material. She found it to her advantage to do her own transcribing for another reason; as she listened to the tapes, she could recall the scene that was represented on the tape more accurately. Not all of the field notes were taped. There were occasions when she had the opportunity to record what she saw and heard by taking notes. All of the field notes were dated and included the location and time. The field notes were as accurate a portrayal as possible of the setting, the people, the spoken words, the nonverbal signals, and the incidents involved.

In conjunction with recording what actually happened, the researcher included in the field notes her feelings, ideas, insights, opinions, and questions as an integral part of the data. Heeding Bogdan's warning (1972:51) against being evaluative in the recording of data, she interpreted behavior only within those personal notes. It must be stated at this point, however, that the researcher did not defer judgment concerning behaviors of the principals and others

as "outsiders" would have done. Aside from the ideas and questions generated from the researcher role, the personal notes contained the thoughts, feelings, opinions, and judgments of the "official" role and occurred as part of the normal routine of fulfilling that role. The major difference was that they were committed to writing.

Although the field notes, some 300 pages, provided the primary source of data, participant observation allowed for the incorporation of multiple sources of data. The following model, adapted from Smith (1979:345), illustrates the multiple sources of data utilized by the researcher during the course of this study:

1. METHODS

Observations

Interviews and conversations

Documents: evaluation records

personnel records

written communications

documentation compiled by principals

2. PERSONS

Principals

Assistant principals

Department Heads

Teachers

Central office personnel: instructional supervisors

directors

assistant superintendents

superintendent

Lawyers

UniServ Director

3. SITUATIONS

Multiple schools

Central office

Lawyer's office

Court

Analysis of Data

Observation, analysis and recording of data did not occur in isolation; they were interwoven processes that occurred during the study. The final stage of analysis took place after the study was completed. Throughout the duration of the study, the researcher continually strived to follow the framework of Smith (1979:348):

At the data level, the question is always, "Have I seen the nooks and crannies of the system as well as the main arenas, to give a valid picture of the system?"

To be confident that all of the nooks and crannies were seen, the researcher continually looked, listened, and asked. That complex observation-analysis process is best described by Lofland (1971:110):

Events and happenings encountered by one activity stimulates new action in the other two activities. Things seen and heard stimulate questions to ask as well as new things to look and listen for. Questions asked and answered stimulate new lines of looking and listening, as well as new questions to ask.

The continual looking for similarities and differences in the data as well as for patterns of behavior and interactions continued after the study ended.

## Sampling

Babbie (1979:213-214), addressing sampling in the field, concludes:

Field researchers attempt to observe everything within their field of study; thus, in a sense, they do not sample at all. In reality, of course, it is impossible to observe everything. To the extent that field researchers observe only a portion of what transpires, then, that which they do observe is a de facto sample of all the possible observations that might have been made.

The researcher did devise a sampling plan at the beginning of the study, and then altered the plan as the study progressed. The primary focal point was the principal, specifically , the principal who identified and attempted to resolve problems relating to the unsatisfactory teacher, regardless of the nature of the teacher problem. The researcher did not limit the observation to any particular level of administration, thus including elementary, middle, and high school principals. As the study progressed, it became apparent to the researcher that to omit the observations of other people, primarily administrators and supervisors at the central office level and staff members at the school level, would leave out a very vital part of the study. They were included in the study if they were in any way connected with the principals as the principals attempted to resolve the problems.

Since the researcher occupied an official role in the school system, her involvement in the observation of the principals was limited by and determined by that official role. There were 134 recorded observations during the course of the study. Most of those



observations were of face-to-face encounters with the principals as the researcher fulfilled her official role. Those encounters lasted from several minutes to two hours. Some of the observations were not face-to-face. There were numerous times when the researcher and the principals talked by telephone. In the daily work life of the researcher, the telephone was a vital means of communication with principals; to have eliminated that mode of communication from the field notes would have resulted in the loss of essential data.

### Confidentiality

The researcher took the necessary precautions to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity. Changes were made to disguise the school system and the setting without distorting the data. All names of participants and schools were coded. Actual names were never used so that the participants could not be identified.

### Reliability and Validity

A question that often confronts the field researcher is "How can one be sure that the observer is not so confined by his personal and cultural bias that, even though he accurately reports what he sees, he has failed to see the same behavior that another unbiased observer, would have seen and recorded?" (Lutz and Iannacone, 1969:123)

The matter of "truth" is addressed by Lofland (1971:111-112):

Every piece of information received by the observer raises a question as to the degree to which it is true; the degree to

which it is an accurate depiction of physical or verbal behavior and belief. We know from our everyday experience that disagreement about the facts of an event is quite common. A good part of the work of courts of law is devoted to sorting out more or less plausible but opposing depictions of 'the facts'. Similarly, disputes about the facts abound in historical research and among operators of military, industrial, and other systems of intelligence. And, it would seem that everyday life, law, history and intelligence systems teach us that there is no easy solution to the problem of determining 'what are the facts'.

It would have been impossible for the researcher to have entered into this study tabula rasa. She was not an "outsider" who had no personal interest in the school system or its employees. She was and had been close to the setting and the people in the system for a number of years. Principals were accustomed to the researcher, in her "official" role, asking questions of them throughout the identification-resolution process. Those questions were necessary to determine the cause of teacher problems and to gain a better understanding of the principals' behaviors. Only by gathering "facts" could the researcher in her official capacity work with the principals to insure a successful resolution of a problem. One may never be absolutely certain of the facts, but the researcher knew the principals and was better able to assess the accuracy of the information given by them than an outsider could.

Simply being aware that she could possess certain biases acted as a safeguard for the researcher as she gathered, recorded, and analyzed data. Bruyn's (Roberts and Adinsanya, 1976:257-258) perspective on objectivity represents the endeavor of this researcher:

Objectivity is an ideal, a state which is always in process

of becoming. It is never fully achieved by any investigator in any final sense. It is a condition of reporting without prejudice, but it need not be a report without feeling or sentiment. There are two ways in which the participant observer assumes that feeling and objectivity may coexist.

First, it is possible for the investigator to have a feeling of respect for his subjects and remain open and unprejudiced in apprehending and reporting about their way of life. Second, it is possible for the sentiments of people being studied to be conveyed in the report without prejudicing the accuracy of correctness of the report itself.

There really isn't a simple answer to the question posed at the beginning of this section, however, this researcher did try to follow the maxim proposed by Lofland (1971:113): "...truthful observation depends heavily upon the sincere good faith, open-mindedness, and thoroughness of the observer".

#### Summary

Field research, with participant-observation as an integral part of research methodology, has been described in full detail; its strengths and weaknesses have been highlighted and stressed for studies such as this one. The strengths of the field research far outweigh any weaknesses by allowing the researcher to observe subjects in their natural setting, thereby observing and recording nuances of attitudes and behaviors that might not otherwise have been noted. A particular advantage to the researcher in this study was her role in the school system, which allowed her access to many sources of data and people in the school system.

Notes

1. See Philip A. Cusick, Inside High School (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1973); Philip Jackson, Life In Classrooms (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968); Louis M. Smith and William Geoffrey, The Complexities Of An Urban Classroom (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1968); Louis M. Smith and Pat M. Keith, Anatomy of Educational Innovation (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1971); Harry F. Wolcott, The Man In The Principal's Office (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973); for collections of essays, studies and annotated bibliographies, refer to Jacquetta Burnett, Anthropology and Education: An Annotated Bibliographic Guide (New Haven: HRAF Press, 1974); Harry F. Wolcott, Ethnographic Approaches To Research In Education: A Bibliography On Method (Georgia: University of Georgia, 1975); George Spindler, Education and Culture: Anthropological Approaches (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963); Joan Roberts and Sherrie Adinsanya, Educational Patterns and Cultural Configurations: The Anthropology Of Education (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1976); Joan Roberts and Sherrie Adinsanya, Schooling In The Cultural Context: Anthropological Studies Of Education (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1976); Francis Ianni and Edward Story, Cultural Relevance and Educational Issues (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1973)
2. Field study, field work, and field research are used interchangeably in social science. Field research was the term preferred by this researcher.
3. The term "participant observation" was coined in 1920 by Eduard C. Lindeman.
4. Useful readings include R. N. Adams and J. J. Preiss, Human Organization Research: Field Relations and Techniques (Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1960); Severyn T. Bruyn, The Human Perspective In Sociology (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966); George J. McCall and J. L. Simmons, Issues In Participant Observation (Mass: Addison Wesley Publishing Co., 1969); John Lofland, Doing Social Life (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1976); John Lofland, Analyzing Social Settings (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1971); Buford Junker, Field Work (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972); Leonard Schatzman and Anselm Strauss, Field Research (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1973); Howard S. Becker, Sociological Work: Method and Substance (Chicago: Aldine, 1970); Earl R. Babbie, The Practice of Social Research (California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1979).
5. Some classic examples include Bronislaw Malinowski, Coral Gardens and Their Magic (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1935), Vols I & II; Bronislaw Malinowski, Argonauts of the Western Pacific

London: G. Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1922); Richard Kluckhohn, Culture and Behavior: Collected Essays of Clyde Kluckhohn (New York: The Free Press, 1962); William F. Whyte, Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955); Nels Anderson, The Hobo (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923); Paul Cressey, The Taxi-Dance Hall (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932); Frederick Thrasher, The Gang (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930); Harvey Zorbaugh, The Gold Coast and The Slum (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929); Louis Wirth, The Ghetto (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928); Erving Goffman, Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1961); Howard S. Becker, et al., Boys In White: Student Culture In Medical School (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); Melville Dalton, Men Who Manage (New York: John Wiley, 1959); John Lofland, Doomsday Cult (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1966); Robert A. Dahl, Who Governs? (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1961); Nelson W. Polsby, Community Power and Political Theory (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1963); for a list of studies see Jurgen Friedrichs and Harmut Ludtke, Participant Observation (England: Saxon House, 1975), pp. 9-12).

6. For a listing of contributors to participant observation in education, see Louis Smith, "An Evolving Logic of Participant Observation, Educational Ethnography, and Other Case Studies", in Review of Research In Education (Illinois: F. E. Peacock, Inc., 1979), pp. 320-324; Lutz and Iannaccone, Understanding Educational Organizations (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1969), pp. 103-105.
7. Introspection refers to the thoughts, insights, questions and feelings of the researcher that were expressed during the study. Referred to as "interpretative Asides" by Smith, "Evolving Logic," p. 333.

CHAPTER IV  
RIDGEMONT COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM: THE  
ENVIRONMENT AND THE ORGANIZATION

The educational system of a given society reflects that social system, and at the same time it is the main force perpetuating it.

Crozier (1982)

It is difficult, if not impossible, to separate a school system from the environment and the people it serves. The school system, Ridgemont County, the phenomenon of the growth that affected both, and the impact that each had on the other are so interwoven as to be inseparable. To understand one, it is necessary to view both. It is of equal importance to know about the school system and its environment in order to have a better understanding of the expectations held for the principals in Ridgemont. It is not the intent of this chapter, however, to portray the totality of the organization, only to give a "feel" for the setting and the people who are a vital part of the system.

Ridgemont School System And Its Environment:  
A History Of Growth

A Historical Perspective

Ridgemont County, nestled in the center of a mid-Atlantic state, was in many respects a typical suburban area, but in other ways the county was unique. Rich in history and resources, Ridgemont County

was reputed to be one of the fastest growing counties on the East Coast, and it seemed destined to reach seventy-five percent of its growth by the end of the century. Bounded by a growing metropolitan area to the north and smaller cities to the east and south, the county was expected to reach a population of four hundred thousand residents by the year 2000. At the time of this study, Ridgemont County had a population of 141 thousand people.

The growth of Ridgemont County can be attributed to the continued suburbanization of the metropolitan area which had gained momentum after World War II as industries sought to locate in the county; later, an influx of a younger population migrated to the county at a time when a financial and political climate encouraged construction and expansion.<sup>1</sup> Prior to the fifties, Ridgemont's economy was primarily based on agriculture, even though three-fourths of its land was woodland. As industry moved in, rural pastures and woodlands gave way to concrete and asphalt, suburbia moved into the county, slowly at first, and then at a phenomenal rate. County roads became major highways and expressways that linked Ridgemont to the growing metropolis and other outlying areas.

Despite the growth of Ridgemont County, only one-eighth of its 446 square miles of territory had been developed in 1979. A factor that was important for future expansion and development, but one that contributed to the attractiveness of the county as it retained a blend of rural atmosphere in the midst of a fast-paced suburbia.

The growth in population was naturally reflected in the Ridgemont school system. To understand the full impact of the population growth, it is necessary to look at the expansion of the school system over a twenty-year period. In the 1958-1959 school year, Ridgemont County School System had a total of twenty-five schools, over 13,000 students and 500 teachers. By 1969, there were forty-one schools, over 31,000 students and a staff of 1500 teacher. Then, in the early 1970s, Ridgemont School System lost eleven schools and approximately 11,000 students in an annexation suit. By August 1979, there were forty schools, three of which were opening for the first time, 31,000 students and 1800 teachers in the school system.

Outside Forces. Although urbanization created problems internally, outside forces caused traumatic conflicts for the county and the school system. Two of the more dramatic events were initiated by a neighboring city in the late 1960s. An attempt by the city to annex twenty-three square miles of the wealthiest and the most heavily populated area of Ridgemont County was successful; however, when the city sought to dilute its school system's black ratio, which was then seventy-five percent, by forcing a merger of the city's schools with Ridgemont County's school system and another neighboring county school system, the merger failed. After lengthy court battles, marches on Washington, D. C. by concerned parents and residents from all three systems, and long months filled with anxiety and unrest, the merger was defeated at the Supreme Court level, but at a cost to Ridgemont



County and the school system. Costly delays in the construction of desperately needed schools and in the expansion of services for the county forced Ridgemont County and the school system to spend feverish years trying to "catch up".

"Catching Up". "Catching up" was reminiscent of another period in Ridgemont School System's past. Once before, when the 1954 desegregation decision caused delays in the sale of bonds, the system faced problems of overcrowding. At that time, much to the dismay of parents, staff, and students, the school system had to resort to double shifts and the highest pupil-teacher ratio in its history.

The ability of the school system to adapt to its growth problems and the outside forces was apparent as the school system met its major construction needs, but more importantly, the system emerged as one of the leading school systems in the State by the late 1960s. The ability of the system to keep up its building program to meet the growth needs was nothing short of astonishing. Thirty-one schools, not including the eleven schools that were annexed, were built after 1954; twenty-seven of which were built during the 1960s and the 1970s; and, twenty-seven of the schools built prior to 1979 were remodeled during the 1970s. Fourteen schools were built during the 1970s.

A Period of "Vision". Ridgemont School System was developing at a time when the educational thrust of the Sputnik era shifted education into a more progressive mode. Ridgemont was a reflection of that time,

primarily because of the vision of the Superintendent, Dr. Paul Avery. During his years of superintendency, 1964-1969, the system was characterized by experimentation, new ideas and approaches to enhance student learning. It was a period of involvement and planning as teachers, administrators, and supervisors at the central office level were encouraged to participate in the planning of the instructional programs and the schools. Staff members traveled throughout the country to observe and to learn about programs in other school systems. As a result, in the mid-1960s, the schools were exemplary of the "open space" concept, or schools without walls. Changes in curriculum and teaching methodology were an extension of the "open" concept: individualized instruction, team teaching, nongradedness, multi-media teaching methods, and multi-age, cross-grade level grouping patterns were the emphasis in instruction. Teachers and staff members, who could implement the new programs, were recruited and encouraged to join the school system.

Continued Improvement. By the early 1970s, Ridgemont School System was already in a "tightening-up" trend when the "Back to Basics" Movement was gaining momentum across the country. As walls replaced open space, the emphasis continued to center on improving achievement in all subject areas, and at all levels. By 1979, Ridgemont was one of the largest school systems in the metropolitan area, and was recognized as having one of the finest instructional programs in the State.

Statistics from a past era in Ridgemont's history emphasize the

full extent of the progress of Ridgemont County School System's academic achievements. In 1870, when the first school systems were being developed in the State, a survey of Ridgemont County revealed that "...of its population of 18,463 (persons), 6,736 were ten years of age and could not read, while 7,870 could not write".<sup>2</sup> By comparison, in 1980, Ridgemont students ranked first or second among the counties in the State on national achievement tests, with students achieving at or above the national norms in all curriculum areas. Another indication of the system's success was that fifty percent of its graduates chose to attend college, while an additional seven percent opted for vocational or trades training.

Ridgemont County. Ridgemont County also weathered the complexities of governing and meeting the demands of its growing population. A government leader in Ridgemont recently emphasized that one of the major issues facing Ridgemont County would be "quality growth". He disclosed some of the strategies that would be used by the governing board to deal with the problem of rising government costs:

We are striving to implement the latest in management techniques in order to improve service and control cost in order to insure that we obtain the maximum benefit for every dollar spent. In addition, we are carefully monitoring the community to insure that we are providing only those services required by the public and that the services are responsive to the needs of the public.

A steadily increasing population, rapid land development, and increases in industrial and commercial development will continue to play an important part in the county's future, and will provide chal-

lenges for what has been an unprecedented increase in the scope and cost of local government. As one local writer cautioned: "The big issue for this decade will center around the manner in which Ridgemont develops".

#### Ridgemont School System: 1979-1980

Although "uneventful" best describes the opening of the 1979-1980 school session, the same cannot be said of the following months, as there were events on the local, state, and even the national level, that characterized the year as being a mixture of newness, discontent, and conflict.

"This has been the smoothest opening that we've had", reported the Superintendent as he addressed the Ridgemont School Board at its first monthly meeting in September 1979 (Field notes 9/24/79). The schools had opened quietly and without incident. The smoothness of the opening of schools was commented on numerous times by both principals and central office staff. Visiting the schools, observing the steady flow of students in the halls, and seeing students hard at work in their classrooms on the first day of school gave the impression that summer break never occurred. Certainly, the students appeared to acknowledge that day as being no different from any other day. Amid the seemingly routine happenings of the day, however, there were two hundred teachers, who were experiencing pangs of apprehension as they each began a new career; there were several thousand students entering different schools because of school district boundary changes;

and, there were over nine hundred "new" students, some entering school for the first time, who were wondering what the day held in store for them as they were caught up in a stream of new faces, new sounds, and the beginning of a new year in a different setting. There were three principals who wished for a "smooth" opening of their schools as they waited and anticipated the rush of hundreds of students through the doors of their respective schools for the first time. A single adjective to describe the first day of school on August 27, 1979 was contingent upon the viewer's perspective.

Reflecting back to the first day of school and then over the events that occurred during the school year, the researcher would consider the following as being the most significant to this study because of their impact on Ridgemont School System. On the national and international level, hostages and the Tehran crisis were foremost in the public's minds, temporarily obscuring the effects of a faltering economy and diminishing resources. On the state level, the General Assembly had been busy with legislation affecting both the State Board of Education and local boards. Teachers received a mandated grievance procedure; probationary teachers, facing nonrenewal of their contracts, would have to be given reasons for the action; principals could no longer be reduced in rank and salary without reason; and, much was being said about instituting teacher competency tests. On the local level, tensions between the superintendent of Ridgemont School System and certain members of Ridgemont County's Board of Supervisors heightened; teachers were more outspoken and demanding

as they discussed salaries for the coming year; discontent and uneasiness characterized the feelings of some administrative and supervisory staff members as changes occurred within the school system; standardized test scores were encouraging; competency tests for high school students were being implemented; and, threats of increased gasoline prices raised concerns about student transportation.

Although the national and world situations may have had a definite role in the climate that existed within the school system, the events on the state and local level carried more of an emotional impact and were more dramatic in their local consequences. Naturally, not all of the events that have been described as occurring during the school year were equally relevant to this study; however, they were presented so that the reader might have some insight into the overall picture of the setting in which this study took place.

### Ridgemont School System

#### Organizational Structure

Ridgemont School System was a typical bureaucratic organization in that it possessed the characteristics of a division of labor and specialization, an impersonal orientation, a hierarchy of authority, rules and regulations, and a career orientation (Hoy and Miskel, 1982: 81-82; Lane, Corwin and Monahan, 1971:183-187). The hierarchical structure of the organization is exemplified in the organization chart, as shown in Figure 1.

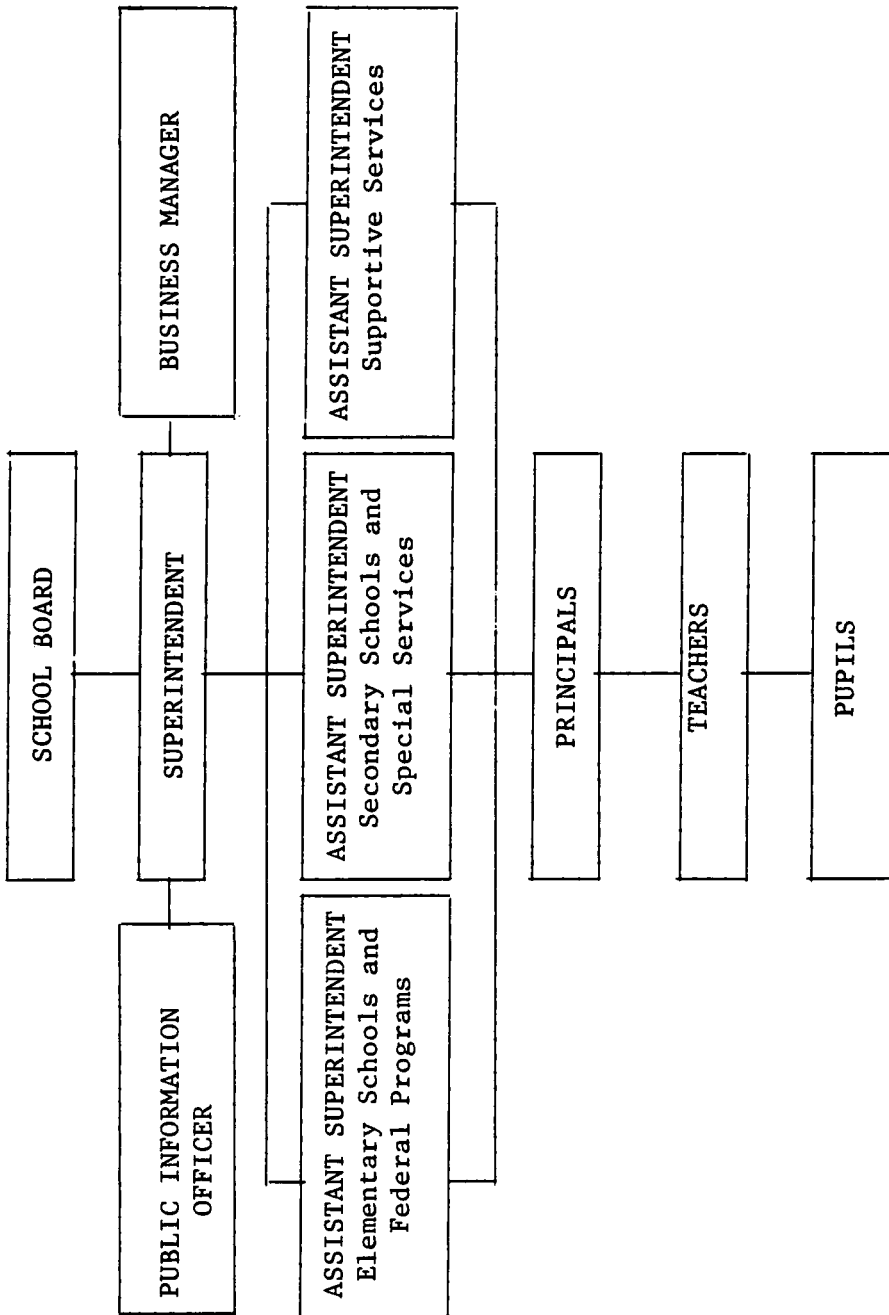


Figure 1

RIDGEMONT COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE

PERSONNEL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

---

Insert

Figure 1

---

The "line" relationship within the school system is exemplified in Figure 1. The business manager, the public information specialist, and the three assistant superintendents reported directly to the superintendent, who in turn was responsive to the school board. Each assistant superintendent was responsible for specific areas. Each of the departments, representing those areas, was headed by a director who was responsible for the department and the personnel within the department. The various departments are shown in Figure 2. With the

---

Insert

Figure 2

---

exception of the Data Services Department, all of the departments had supervisory level personnel whose titles were of three categories: supervisor (twelve-month employees), program specialist (eleven-month employees), and specialist (eleven and/or twelve month employees). There was no distinction between the role of the supervisor and the program specialist, except for the length of contract year. The superintendent expressed his desire to eventually have instructional super-



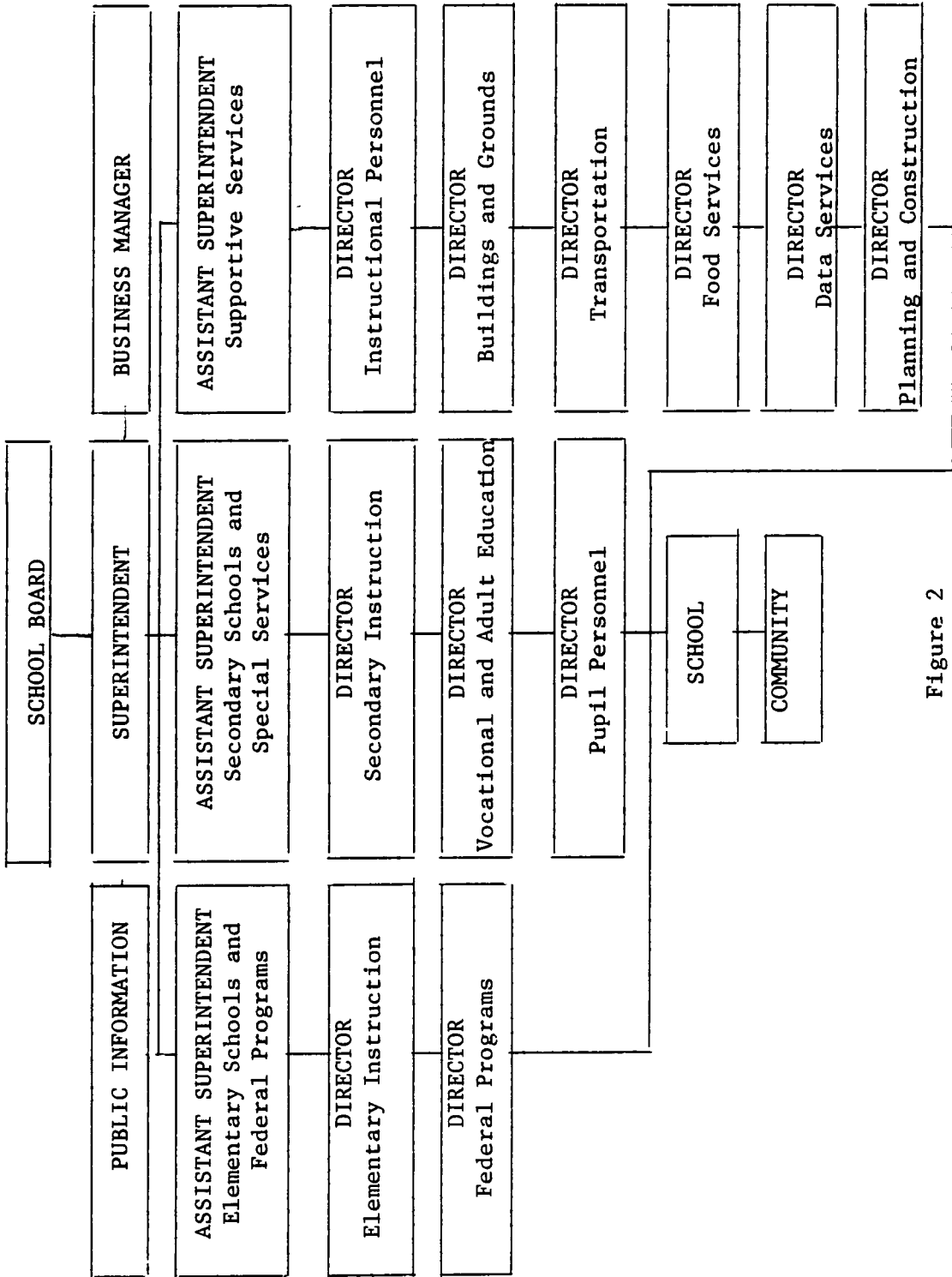


Figure 2

RIDGEMONT COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM SPECIALIZATION  
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

isory personnel on eleven month contracts. In all, there were twenty-two supervisors and program specialists within the Instructional Departments.

### Schools

There were forty schools in Ridgemont: twenty-three elementary, eight middle schools, eight high schools, and one vocational high school. The organizational structure of the schools was K-5 for the elementary schools; 6-8 in the middle schools, and 9-12 for the high schools. The average size elementary school had 750 students; the largest elementary school had close to one thousand students. The average size secondary school had approximately 850 students.

Every school was considered to be well staffed in accordance with state guidelines. Each school had a full-time principal and a support staff comprised of at least one assistant principal, two or more clerical members, three or more teacher aides, as well as cafeteria and custodial personnel. Besides the regular complement of classroom teachers, every school had at least one full time teacher for learning disabilities, a speech therapist, and an assortment of other special education teachers, including mental retardation, emotionally disturbed, hearing impaired, visually impaired, and pre-school handicapped, assigned either full or part time. In all, there were 170 special education teachers assigned to the schools. In addition, there were fifteen psychologists and nine visiting teachers/social workers assigned to the schools. At the time of this study, there were 3,654 employees;

2400 of those employees were instructional personnel.<sup>3</sup>

### Relationships

#### School Board Members

As the organizational chart (Figure 1) indicates, the superintendent was responsible to the School Board, an appointed board of five members. The superintendent was appointed by the School Board to serve a term of four years. Dr. C. W. Holmes, Superintendent at the time of this study, was serving his second term with Ridgemont School System.

The board members, five white males, ranging in age from mid-forties to early sixties, represented the five magisterial districts of the county. The School Board, officially termed, "The Ridgemont County School Board of Ridgemont County", was vested with power and authority "from the Constitution of State, from the State Code, and from the Regulations of the State Board of Education (Policy 2000, Ridgemont Public School Board Policies and Regulations Manual). The School Board members were appointed by the School Trustee Electoral Board whose three members were appointed by the County's two Circuit Court Judges. That method of selection had met opposition over the past several years; opponents favored the method of having the School Board members appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. The method of selecting school board members was to become a political issue during this study as opponents sought to gain enough support

for a referendum that would bring the issue up for a vote by the residents of Ridgemont.<sup>4</sup>

The Chairman of the School Board described the role of the School Board (Field Notes 10/79):

...we try to make sure that we do establish policy and leave it up to the Superintendent to run the school system. The chairman helps to keep things in perspective so one doesn't get into the other's business too much...and it is possible for the Board members to dig into the details of running the schools--things that should be left to the Superintendent. In fact, board members could get so involved that they practically work full-time at running the schools when they really should not. They should represent the people and establish board policy.

On several occasions, the researcher was in the presence of Dr. Holmes when he spoke favorably of his relationship with the School Board. At other times, he would be exasperated over their reluctance to act on such matters as boundary changes, budget, and issues that were controversial. Dr. Holmes publicly displayed respect for the members of the board for their expertise and their dedication. The Chairman of the board would, on occasion, joke about Dr. Holmes and his tendency to be "long winded". It seemed clear that although they did not always agree on matters, there was mutual respect between the Superintendent and the Board members.

Board meetings, were held twice a month, and were a mixture of routine, informality, unpredictability, and levity. Board members seldom agreed on issues, especially major issues, but their disagreements were generally controlled. The researcher observed tense moments in the interaction of the Board members on some matters presented by

Dr. Holmes and/or his staff members, but tempers were never displayed publically.

When asked about the major concerns that the School Board encountered, the Chairman of the board identified the continual changing of school boundaries as a major concern of parents and a controversial issue to confront (local newspaper article, 1980):

The main concern of parents, generally, has to do with the boundary changes of the schools. This causes them (parents) more concern than anything else I can think of. "Where's my child going to go to school?" "How far is he going to be hauled?" "will he get to go to the school that we love so much, or will he be transferred to another school that we don't know about?" These are the questions we hear more often.

Some of the more heated board meetings during the study were concerned with a boundary change proposal that involved eight schools. The School Board did not accept the Superintendent's recommendation, and responded instead to the concerns of the parents. A number of changes had to be made to the proposal before final approval was given by the Board. The proposal for boundary changes had been made in an effort to relieve overcrowded conditions in some of the elementary schools until a proposed bond issue could, hopefully, be passed.

### Superintendent

The Superintendent, a tall and impressive looking man in his late fifties, was a complicated and controversial figure. Leadership textbooks would describe him as autocratic; as a leader, he was forceful, dynamic, involved and demanding. He appeared dedicated to the system and proud of its accomplishments. As an individual, he was admired

and respected by most people, but feared and distrusted by others, primarily because he openly expressed his likes and dislikes. He was totally intolerant of mediocrity and took a strong stance on eliminating unsatisfactory teachers and other employees from the system. His assistant jokingly acknowledged that his motto should be: "Forgive but remember". As one assistant said, "He (Superintendent) has a mind like a steel trap, he never forgets, especially when someone does something he doesn't like".

As the thirteenth superintendent in Ridgemont School System, Dr. Holmes brought changes to the school system. Most of those changes reflected a "tightening up" of the instructional programs and a high expectation for performance. Schools were to be places where students came to learn, not to "play around"; discipline policies were defined and implemented; attendance policies were established and adhered to.

As a result of his stance on unsatisfactory performance; his high visibility in the schools, and his refusal to be compromised by the Ridgemont County Teachers' Association, there were some who referred to him as a "hatchet man" and "anti-teacher". In an interview with a local reporter (1980), Dr. Holmes addressed some of those concerns:

...I don't think I deserve to be called anti-teacher. Teachers have better classrooms, equipment, and tools than before...there are more teacher aides and more extra programs...I am in every teacher's classroom twice a year...At first, my presence in the schools created nervousness, probably because the teachers never saw a superintendent in their classes before.  
...I don't like to fire people. But I don't run from the reputation of hatchet man...and I will not....I cannot stand to have

people I know to be bad teachers. In another superintendancy, I fired 40% of the teachers and 70% of the principals...then we built a good system. I don't go along with 'don't rock the boat'.

In that same interview, Dr. Holmes spoke of his challenge when he came to Ridgemont County and of the progress achieved.

...when I came here seven years ago, I thought the system was basically good, but there were a lot of unhappy parents...there was a lack of attention to the basics, schools were without walls, test scores were nothing to brag about...The time was right for a change....There were six different reading programs being used ...teaching needed improvement; some principals and supervisors had been letting things ride...Vocational programs were weak, and there was practically nothing in art and music, particularly in the middle schools.

The School Board outlined its goals, and the county has made good progress. We have coordinated our programs. Our failure rate is below average. We have a good remediation program. There are far more people scoring at the 99th percentile than the 25th.

### Teachers

Teachers constituted the largest group of employees in Ridgemont School System. The 1800 teachers were basically a young group of employees; the average experience level was 9.7 years. Thirty-six percent of the teachers possessed graduate degrees; with few exceptions, teachers were endorsed in the subject area in which they taught. Nation wide recruiting was reflected in the fact that 40% of the teachers were from 39 states, other than Virginia.

A significant number of teachers were interested in being promoted to administrative or supervisory level positions. The philosophy of the school system was to seek administrators and supervisors from within the system, although outside applicants were hired to fill such vacancies.

A training program, designed to acquaint perspective administrators and supervisors with the philosophy and the programs of the system was held annually. In order to be eligible for the training program, teachers had to be recommended by their principals or central office personnel. Every year, twenty teachers participated in the program.

Teachers in Ridgemont School System were historically a vocal, but non-militant group of employees. Over the past two decades, the teachers had lived through the growing pains of the system--most of the them taught in crowded classrooms; some of them taught in trailers, churches, and on stages within the schools, when construction was in progress. The benefit for the teachers of having endured the changes was that they worked in modern, well-equipped, air-conditioned schools (all new schools were air-conditioned); they had low pupil-teacher ratios. The pupil-teacher ratio for the elementary schools was a county average of 24:1; secondary teachers had a ratio of 21:1.

During the 1979-1980 school year, a groundswell of discontent over salaries was beginning to take place. The Ridgemont Teachers' Education Association played an active part in perpetuating the concern by speaking out for higher salaries, claiming that teachers in Ridgemont were not able to keep up with the rising economy. The Association used the media to voice its concerns, and became politically active by campaigning for the election of certain members for the Ridgemont County Board of Supervisors. They were successful in



that their candidates were elected. The rising discontent culminated in a "work to the contract" movement during the 1980-1981 school year.<sup>5</sup>

### Principals

The principalship was a key position within the system. Principals were solely responsible for the successful operation of their schools. As such, they were accountable for the primary functions of the job, including (1) the quality of the instructional program, (2) the selection and management of personnel, (3) a climate of learning that fostered success and high achievement for students, (4) the supervision of the financial and physical resources of the school, and (5) a strong public relations program with their communities. Although those responsibilities had not changed over the years, principals in Ridgemont acknowledged that the emphasis in all of the areas had changed dramatically over the past decade. Some of the more outstanding changes will be briefly presented, with the exception of the personnel function, which will be described in detail in the following chapter.

Accountability for the instructional program shifted from the central office level to the school level when Dr. Holmes was appointed to the superintendency. A principal describes the resultant changes in the roles of the principals and supervisors (Field notes 5/1980):

...the decision making process as far as curriculum is concerned is now more at the principal level with supervisors and others being on call, if you need them. Ten years ago, we didn't get personally involved in curriculum matters. When there were changes in curriculum or accrediting standards, we were called in for meetings and, perhaps, got an inservice from a supervisor or the director of instruction, but we didn't get that personally in-

volved. Supervisors now act more as liaisons...and, they are on call if principals need them to observe a teacher, or if they need books."

Accountability for the success of the instructional programs within their schools created some new experiences for principals. The concern for student achievement placed an emphasis on standardized test scores both within the system and outside the system. High test scores brought recognition for principals within the system. On the other hand, low or declining scores evoked a visit to the superintendent's office. As test scores became public knowledge, they served as a visible means of comparing schools. Many perspective homeowners used test scores as the primary criteria in "shopping" for their future homesites.

Without exception, principals in Ridgemont could be described as "student-oriented". "In order to be an effective principal," summarized one high school principal, "you have to get their (students) respect and, in order to do that, you have to be involved with them." (Field notes 5/1980) All of the principals seemed to operate under a "fair but firm" philosophy when dealing with student behavior. The Superintendent's firm stance on his position that schools were places where students went to learn, not to waste time, brought strong support from parents and enabled principals to implement strong discipline and attendance policies. Many of the principals, especially secondary principals, felt challenged by the legal developments that altered their role with students, such as student rights, compulsory school attend-

ance, discipline, search and seizure, and due process. One middle school principal expressed concern over the amount of time required in court cases (Field notes 5/1980):

...Some years back, the only time that I would have thought about going to court would have been in a drug related matter, or maybe a school vandalism case....I spend so much time in court now that I feel I could present the cases better than the lawyers...seriously, I know all the questions, especially in compulsory attendance cases...

Dealing with the demands of parents to become more involved in school matters was a task that could not be shunned by the principals in Ridgemont. A middle school principal described her change in attitude toward parent involvement and the importance she later attached to that new relationship (Field notes 5/1980):

If you ask my assistants what my most important job is, besides the selection of my staff, they'll tell you that it is school and community relations. Far more of my time today is spent being visible, making myself available to the public, listening to parental concerns, having coffee claches, attending PTA (Parent Teacher Association) board meetings....I didn't even want a PTA! I didn't want these people coming in here and telling me how to run my school, but I have learned...with the public eye on education today and with parents having a right to have some influence in their child's curriculum, it is something you cannot ignore and, if you do ignore it, you are going to get in trouble. I know a principal who did that, and he's still doing it...it's almost like he's a glutton for punishment.

Now if anyone would have said to me three years ago, "Are you going to have open house this year for a week and invite parents to come in and attend class with their children and have lunch with them?" I would have said, "Hell, no!" To show you how far I have come, we did just that this year...and, if I had hired a New York advertising agency to get me some publicity, I could not have done better. I am still getting letters complimenting the school, the attractiveness of the building, the concern of the teachers for the students, the orderly manner in which students change class (I always smile at that one), the cleanliness of the cafeteria....Like I said, three years ago you could not have convinced me that it would have been a positive

thing to do...now I know how powerful the support of the community can be.

The extent of that perceived importance of that relationship is revealed in her next statement:

There is always the pressure to keep the lid on. I was always concerned about central office knowing "if the lid blew", and I still am...but...I am more concerned about what will happen in the community.

The importance of being perceived by the community and the parents as being effective was stressed by an elementary principal:

...if you are a good principal, and the community likes you and feels that you are doing an outstanding job, they somehow don't really seem to care what the superintendent or the school board is doing. If you are doing a poor job, and things are not going well, the opposite is true...the problems go upward; whereas, if the school is doing very well, things "above" seem to not matter a great deal. (Field notes: 4/1980)

Principals in Ridgemont, not unlike their counterparts in other school systems throughout the country, performed their functions during a fast paced day, characterized by high visibility and numerous face-to-face encounters. Surprisingly, they admitted they would not change their worklife drastically--only slow it down to "a fast trot".

As stated earlier, there were forty principals and three levels of principalship in Ridgemont. The average age of principals in the system was 43.8. Thirty percent of the principals were women, a figure slightly higher than national averages (Knezevich, 1978; McCleary and Thomson, 1979). Seventy percent of the principals were married. All of the principals were endorsed in their respective levels of principalship; some were endorsed in elementary and secondary

levels. All of the principals possessed a master's degree; two had doctorates. Of the elementary principals, 47.8 percent were endorsed to teach in the elementary grades. Many of the principals, at all levels, were endorsed in social studies, mathematics, science, and English. A few principals were endorsed in physical education; one had an endorsement in art, while another was endorsed in special education. With few exceptions, the majority of principals moved up within the system, going primarily from the assistant principalship to the principalship.

#### Summary

Ridgemont School System was characterized as a rapidly growing system. Faced with many of the problems encountered with change, the system weathered numerous storms over the years. Ridgemont enjoyed many advantages in the form of well-staffed, well-equipped modern facilities and a broad and effective instructional program to meet the needs of a variety of students. Although often at odds with the County Board of Supervisors, the Ridgemont School Board and the Superintendent enjoyed an amiable and productive working relationship with one another. Principals in Ridgemont were recognized as leaders of their schools, and fully accountable for their schools and the performance of their staff members. The overriding characteristic of Ridgemont was its high expectations for performance of staff and students.

Ridgemont was not immune from problems faced by school systems

throughout the country, particularly the effects of tight budgets and demands for accountability. The State legislature was discussing competency tests for teachers, while, at the same time, mandating changes in the form of a grievance procedure and a process for non-renewal of contracts for non-tenured teachers.

Notes

1. According to the Ridgemont County Planning Department, the population in Ridgemont County was more affluent, somewhat younger with larger families than the State or nation. The median age was 27.9 in 1980.
2. The statistics were obtained from a local article written about the history of Ridgemont County.
3. Instructional personnel included all administrative and supervisory personnel, teachers, psychologists, visiting teachers, clerical staff, and teacher aides.
4. When the issue of changing the method of selecting school board members in Ridgemont County was brought before the citizens for a vote, the citizens, by a small margin, voted to keep the electoral board method of selection.
5. This researcher would not want to mislead the reader into thinking the militancy was widespread or that it was intense. The most outspoken group was the representatives from the Ridgemont Teachers' Association. Perhaps the support shown for the teachers by their principals who supported higher salaries for teachers was a primary factor in keeping the potential morale defeating issue from getting out of hand.

CHAPTER V  
ORGANIZATION OF THE PERSONNEL FUNCTION  
IN RIDGEMONT SCHOOL SYTEM

Personnel decisions so completely permeate every aspect of the school system, and are so vitally related to educational outcomes, that they must be regarded as the administrator's primary concern.

Castetter (1981:55)

In this chapter the personnel function, the responsibilities associated with that function, and the expectations held for principals in Ridgemont School System are described. The involvement of central office administration in the personnel function is also delineated. The central focus of this chapter is with the strategies and procedures designed to deal with the most difficult tasks within the personnel function, that of dealing with teachers who were identified as unsatisfactory. External factors, as well as internal factors, affected the involvement of principals in the personnel function; those factors serve as the introduction to the chapter.

External Factors

In a previous chapter, the various factors affecting principals in the performance of the personnel function were described as being unparalleled in the history of educational administration. For the purpose of review, those influences can be attributed to three major



factors: (1) a vocal and demanding public seeking "quality" education, (2) a combination of federal and state laws and regulations which impacted on the management prerogatives of principals, and (3) a highly mobile workforce, the fruition of a faltering economy and declining enrollments in public schools throughout the country.

Ridgemont was not exempt from those factors. The school system's favorable reputation for its instructional program did not leave the system exempt from the effects of a growing national concern and discontent with public education. What appeared in the media on a national basis was often translated by the residents of Ridgemont County as being "true" of Ridgemont. As a result, the 1970s were reminiscent of a "tightening up" of the instructional program and a time when school community relations became a priority for the school system and the principals, in particular, who found they could more easily achieve the goals of their schools by actively involving their communities.

A few years before this study was initiated, a survey of teachers in the State revealed a climate of discontent with management practices, with two-thirds of the respondents optimistic that negotiations would eventually come to the State (Carlton and Johnson, 1977). In 1977, the State Supreme Court ruled that collective negotiations were unconstitutional. Only a few school systems within the State negotiated at that time with their teachers; Ridgemont was not one of those systems. Although unsuccessful in their lobbying efforts for negotiations,

teachers elsewhere in the State were successful in obtaining laws and procedures for grievances, termination of teacher contracts, probation, and suspension of teachers. During the course of this study, principals and central office administrators in Ridgemont were faced with a new challenge--the UniServ Director, Miss Cronin. The position of UniServ Director had been in existence for some time, but Miss Cronin brought to the position what Ridgemont's central office administrators termed "union tactics".

Ridgemont was also affected by a changing workforce of teachers. Unlike their counterparts in many parts of the country, Ridgemont was a growing school system, and as such, attracted teachers from almost every state in the country, especially from those states where reduction in force was a reality. Recruiting on a nationwide basis, Ridgemont attracted approximately 5,000 applicants every year; that was true during this study. Since a number of applicants were from states historically associated with unions and collective bargaining, the Superintendent on two occasions during this study cautioned the Director of Personnel about hiring teachers who had "union" experience. At a time when collective bargaining was being pursued at the State level, the Superintendent did not want "reinforcement" for the Ridgemont Education Association.

#### Internal Factors

In order to accomplish the system's goal of increasing student achievement, attention on a system-wide basis was directed toward

improved performance of teachers in every school and in every classroom in Ridgemont School System. The Superintendent's stance on the matter of performance was well understood by the administrators and the instructional supervisors within the system. He made his expectations of the principals' role in handling unsatisfactory teachers known the first time he met with his staff members after assuming the role of superintendent. On that occasion and at other times over the years, he reiterated his past record of "firing" teachers and administrators to get the performance he expected.

To reinforce his expectations, the Superintendent visited the schools, scrutinized the performance of teachers, questioned the principals about the performance of their teachers, and visited instructional supervisors to determine their opinions regarding "weak" teachers. His awareness of the teachers whose performance was considered unsatisfactory, his expectations for the performance of all members of the system, and his support for the principals in their decisions when disciplinary actions had to be taken, provided a strong foundation for the resolution of problems stemming from the unsatisfactory teacher.

Identifying and resolving problems regarding unsatisfactory performance, although a primary focus, was only one of the expectations held for principals in the performance of the personnel function. The leadership focus for principals was on the selection of "quality" teachers and the effective management of those teachers to accomplish

the goals of the school system. The ability of principals to provide the leadership that allowed for maximum performance and fostered congruence between the individual and the system was often challenged during the course of this study. The Superintendent's emphasis on improving instruction and "weeding out" unsatisfactory teachers led to the involvement of central office administrators and instructional supervisors in the instructional programs and in the personnel function. The extent of that involvement led to a mixture of problems that would have long lasting effects. The expectations for principals, their role in the personnel function, and the nature of the involvement of central office administration in that function, are presented in the following section.

#### The Personnel Function Of Principals In Ridgemont

Various writers (Castetter, 1981; Hencley, McCleary and McGrath, 1970; Burden and Whitt, 1973; Shuster and Steward, 1973; and, Lipham and Hoeh, 1974) link the effectiveness of principals with successful accomplishment of the personnel function. Lipham and Hoeh (1974) outline fifteen competencies which they propose to be representative, not inclusive, of competencies required of effective principals. Because of the similarity of the fifteen competencies to those required of principals in Ridgemont County, the competencies will be shown in their entirety. Lipham and Hoeh (1974:232-233) present the personnel responsibilities and competencies in stages:

## STAGE I. IDENTIFICATION OF NEW STAFF

- Competency No. 1. The principal defines the specific role requirements for each position vacancy.
- Competency No. 2. The principal interviews and selects from identified candidates the staff member best qualified for each position and recommends appointment.

## STAGE II. ORIENTATION OF STAFF

- Competency No. 3. The principal coordinates the orientation of new staff members to the school system, the staff, the student body, and the community.

## STAGE III. ASSIGNMENT OF STAFF

- Competency No. 4. The principal assesses the degree of congruence between expectations for the role and the need-disposition of the individual.
- Competency No. 5. The principal assigns new staff members to optimize the achievement of both organizational goals and the goals of the individual staff members.
- Competency No. 6. The principal reassigns experienced staff members to positions and roles to permit the attainment of organizational and individual goals.
- Competency No. 7. The principal articulates and coordinates individual and subunit goals and programs with school and school system goals and programs.

## STAGE IV. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- Competency No. 8. The principal engages in development activities designed to update his professional knowledge and skills related to educational and administrative processes.
- Competency No. 9. The principal conducts a systematic program of staff improvement through classroom observation and conferences with staff.
- Competency No. 10. The principal organizes such staff improvement activities as school visitation, professional activities, the professional library, student teaching programs, and in-service activities.
- Competency No. 11. The principal guides each staff member toward selective involvement in staff improvement.
- Competency No. 12. The principal assesses group and individual inservice educational activities and recommends ways of improving them.

## STAGE V. EVALUATION OF STAFF

- Competency No. 13. The principal involves the staff in reaching

agreement on the purposes of evaluation and the procedures to be utilized.

Competency No. 14. The principal collects, organizes, and analyzes data concerning the processes and products of teaching.

Competency No. 15. The principal bases his decisions on specific evaluative data.

Analysis of the degree of involvement of principals in Ridgemont in each of the previously mentioned areas of responsibility indicates the importance attached to the personnel function at the school level. The degree of involvement of principals and other members of the system in the five areas of responsibility is presented in the following sections.

#### Identification of New Staff

As long as any administrator could remember, principals in Ridgemont had been allowed to select their new staff members. Dr. Holmes emphasized that responsibility for principals. He remarked to a group of new teachers (Field Notes: 8/1979) what was a well known fact to central office staff and principals--principals had the final decision in the selection of their teachers. He told the new teachers, "When I was a young principal, I didn't hire my teachers...they were sent to me by my superintendent. After I had to clean up some of 'his problems', I always said that if I had a superintendency, my principals would select their teachers".

Recruitment of personnel was the responsibility of the Department of Personnel, although principals were invited to accompany members of the Personnel Department on recruitment trips to college and university

campuses. Principals worked closely with the appropriate specialist in the Personnel Department in the determination of staff needs and in the selection of new staff members. Prior to teacher applicants being sent to the schools for interviews, they were first interviewed by at least two people at the central office level--a personnel specialist and a curriculum supervisor. The involvement of supervisors in the screening process was more prevalent with special education supervisors and secondary curriculum supervisors because of the content knowledge involved.

During the course of the study, the researcher observed that principals had as many as 10-15 applicants for each vacancy; only in a few cases did principals interview less than five applicants. Principals also considered teachers from other schools within the system when vacancies occurred. A transfer policy allowed teachers to transfer from one school to another within the system. Requests for transfers were processed and coordinated by the appropriate specialist in the Personnel Department. Teachers who desired transfers had to interview with principals of the schools where vacancies existed.

#### Orientation of New Staff

Orientation was an extension of the recruitment process in Ridgmont and considered an extremely important task for principals and others in the system. Successful adjustment was one means of insuring the chances for effective performance of those teachers who were newcomers to the system. Orientation of those teachers was a means of

placing them on an even footing with other teachers in the school system. Principals assumed a major responsibility for the adjustment of their new teachers by making them aware of the expectations of their positions; by acquainting them with the community, fellow teachers in their buildings; and, hopefully, relieving personal anxieties of those teachers by helping them adjust to a new environment and, for many, their first teaching job.

On a system-wide basis, the Instructional Departments and the Personnel Department assisted in the orientation of new teachers. Every year, the Personnel Department sponsored a breakfast or a luncheon for new teachers and invited members of the School Board, Ridgemont County's Board of Supervisors, and administrators and supervisors from within the system to welcome the new teachers. It was probably the only time that those teachers saw that collection of individuals together in one location. There were over 150 new teachers at the luncheon in August 1979; 300 lunches were served that day. Supervisors met with their respective new teachers after the luncheon to provide further orientation, particularly regarding county curriculum goals. Throughout the school year, supervisors and principals spent considerable time helping new teachers adjust to their assignments.

#### Assignment of Staff

Teaming had been a long accepted concept and practice within the administrative and teaching ranks to achieve the goals of the system.



Teachers were therefore selected with a strong consideration being given for their compatibility as a member of a department or a grade level. A majority of principals at all levels of the principalship involved their department heads and/or team leaders in the selection of teachers; a responsibility that was readily accepted by the teachers. Many of the teachers gave of their own time during the summer months to interview perspective team members.

One of the major tasks of principals involved the assignment of teachers to specific positions to insure successful achievement of school and system goals. As one elementary principal explained (Field notes: 3/1980):

"...we all have teachers who have certain strengths and we all have teachers who have some weaknesses....The master stroke of a good administrator is to be able to utilize those strengths and weaknesses in such a way that strengthens the instructional program....To be able to do that successfully, a principal really has to know his teachers and their capabilities."

The principal cautioned that teachers did not always agree with such decisions (Field notes: 3/1980):

"I have some teachers who make fantastic kindergarten and first grade teachers, but I don't see them making good fifth grade teachers. To put them in those positions, simply because they want a change, is not always advisable....I had a teacher last year who could not understand that...she couldn't understand why I didn't assign her to kindergarten. I finally had to tell her that I did not see her as a kindergarten teacher. Well, she couldn't understand why--she was certified. She ended up transferring to another school."

Principals had complete authority in the assignment of teachers within their schools. Assignments were monitored by the appropriate personnel specialist; close communication between principals and personnel spe-

cialists was in evidence and, more than likely, contributed to the lack of conflict in the assignment of teachers. Growing enrollments, frequent boundary changes, and the addition of new schools contributed to the need for close communication between the schools and the Personnel Department.

### Staff Development

Staff development offered a positive approach toward improving the performance of teachers. Principals often consulted with supervisors in determining staff development needs for their faculties, or for certain teachers. During the course of this study, courses were made available for certain teachers who needed content knowledge in their subject areas. On several occasions, arrangements were made for teachers to visit and observe other selected teachers in the school system to broaden their technical skills.

The first week of work for all teachers in Ridgemont was always devoted to inservice, conducted primarily by the Instructional Departments. At least three more days during the school year were designated as inservice days; one day was set aside for principals to conduct inservice within their schools. Weekly faculty meetings were held within the schools for not only school tasks and assignment, but also for instructional improvement.

Staff development was a highly significant aspect of a principal's leadership role in Ridgemont. Many of the principals recognized even more subtle influences on teachers development, those evolving out of

the principals' own abilities to influence the behavior of their teachers by motivating them toward effective performance and by reducing barriers to their teachers' development. Paul Cranston, for example, an elementary principal who was noted for his effectiveness in "turning schools around", shared what he considered to be necessary and desirable behaviors for principals in influencing teachers toward maximum performance. The following descriptors reflect those behaviors that enabled him to be "an instructional leader of instructional people". According to Mr. Cranston, he had to be (Field notes: 3/1980):

"...proactive...a peace maker...an acute listener...a motivator ...an evaluator...an analyzer...a problem solver...approachable... a reservoir of knowledge...an arranger...innovative...able to see the 'whole' picture...knowledgeable of power and influence, and not afraid to use either...trustworthy...able to use time wisely ...willing to allow for controlled creativity...and constantly alert and attuned to needs of teachers..."

Many of the principals were also engaged in continuing education courses for their own development; others were pursuing doctorate degrees in their field. Courses designed to meet the needs of principals were provided by the school system. Some of the training sessions conducted within the last year included updates on school law, interviewing techniques, and other sessions designed to acquaint the principals with changes in special education, reading, math, and gifted education. Most of the principals' offices displayed educational magazines and journals. Some of the principals subscribed to the Harvard Business Review; one principal was a member of the American Management Associ-

ation. Principals were encouraged to attend their professional organizations' conferences, and were given leave time to do so. Several of the principals held offices in their respective State principals' associations.

### Evaluation of Staff

There was an established evaluation procedure for teachers in Ridgemont. The procedure, adopted in 1972, incorporated a behavioral objective concept for assessing performance. Teachers were evaluated every fourth year, unless they transferred to another school or their performance declined. Principals were notified in August 1979 of the teachers who were due their annual evaluation; there were 325 teachers scheduled for evaluation during the 1979-1980 school year. Evaluations were scheduled to be completed by May 1980. A final copy of those evaluations were to be filed in every teacher's personnel file which was maintained in the Department of Personnel.

The competencies (Lipham and Hoeh, 1974) for performance evaluation which were described earlier in this chapter were not difficult for principals to fulfill as long as the teacher performance met the prescribed standards. It was when unsatisfactory performance was identified that the evaluation tasks and the decision making regarding those tasks became less tidy and more difficult. In Ridgemont, that difficulty was heightened by a number of complex factors: (1) the involvement of central office administrators and supervisors, in particular, in the assessment of teacher performance; (2) the emergence

of State laws which prescribed procedures for filing grievances, terminating teacher contracts, placing teachers on probation, suspending teachers; (3) the increased emphasis on teacher rights, perpetuated by the Ridgemont Education Association and the UniServ Director; and (4) the lack of experience of Ridgemont principals with teachers who challenged their decisions, especially regarding performance. The uncertainty of principals having to deal with those factors created a need for a more centralized approach through the establishment of procedures and strategies to insure the most effective resolution of the problems resulting from unsatisfactory performance.

The Development Of A Procedure For Resolving  
Personnel Problems In Ridgemont

Ridgemont's First Step

The formal procedure for identifying and resolving personnel problems had its beginning in April 1979 when a memorandum was issued by the Assistant Superintendent of Supportive Services. Although the memorandum contained only two sentences, it represented the first attempt in centralizing the resolution of personnel problems within the Department of Personnel by mandating that the principals "report all personnel problems to the Director of Personnel immediately upon identification".

Mrs. Bridgeport, the Director of Personnel, reflected on the reasons for centralizing the resolution of personnel problems within one department (Field notes: 12/1979):

Too much was happening at once....We were growing almost too fast...there were a number of laws that put teacher discipline and management in a legalistic framework. Ridgemont had always lived by the philosophy that the less put in writing, the better...our policy manual was a fourth the size of manuals in other systems our size and smaller....We needed to be better organized and prepared for all of the changes we were facing. The information explosion because of the increase in regulations and laws required that resolution of personnel problems be handled within one department.

Centralizing the procedure within one department was also necessary because of the number of people involved in the evaluation of teacher performance. "Too many cooks in the kitchen would only result in problems for the principals", explained Mrs. Bridgeport.

Although the laws and regulations posed constraints for administrators, Mrs. Bridgeport offered a more positive view (Field notes: 12/1979):

The laws and regulations are good; some are a little too stringent, but necessary. I will be the first to say that personnel practices, at least those I've observed over the years in many school systems, including our system, need to be changed. Most people deny prejudice and unfairness in hiring and management practices, but both have existed for a long time. The laws and mandates have resulted in a strengthening of personnel practices by making them fairer...

### A Support System

Making certain that administrators were knowledgeable of the various laws and regulations, and ensuring that the laws and regulations were properly implemented were important reasons for establishing a procedure in Ridgemont, but, according to Mrs. Bridgeport, it was also necessary to ensure that principals had a support system. That support system included "walking through" problems with principals

until problems were resolved. Mrs. Bridgeport explained that aspect of the support system (Field notes: 12/79):

I realized very early in my career in personnel that principals and other administrators were apprehensive and insecure when they had to confront an unsatisfactory teacher or a difficult personnel issue. The malady of insecurity was just as prevalent for the principals who were recognized as being outstanding as it was for the principals who were not as highly rated. I also found a lack of tolerance on the part of central office administrators for principals who made "mistakes" or who didn't handle a problem as they thought the principals should have. The general reaction from central office administrators was that principals should know how to handle personnel problems. They may have known how, but they were insecure in handling problems....As I walked through their problems with them, the principals became more confident and competent in handling problems; some principals needed only a little assistance, others required more time, but the end result was the same--they were successful.

"Walking through" a problem with principals was, in essence, training, a one-on-one learning experience. Principals in Ridgemont had also been exposed to inservice training in group sessions with topics covering the legal procedures to follow when dealing with the termination of contracts, how to deal with conflict, interviewing skills, teacher evaluation, and other sessions designed to keep principals up-to-date on management practices and new laws and regulations. Principals had to be able to transfer the knowledge from the large group training sessions to their actual situations in their schools, and that was where the one-on-one support system was important; according to Mrs. Bridgeport (Field notes: 12/79):

Telling a principal how to handle a difficult situation is only effective to a point. The principal has to actually experience situations and have a support person to talk to, to share ideas and feelings with, and to get advice and guidance from, when necessary. The problem with simply telling principals how to

dismiss a teacher or how to handle conflict is that they are dealing with people problems and no two problems are alike. What worked with one teacher could be totally ineffective with another teacher....Human nature is complex....when a principal has to confront a teacher, and especially if the principal is upset over the behavior of that teacher, it is important for the principal to understand what the problem is, and why it is a problem for him or her...I ask a lot of questions such as "Why?", "How do you know?", "What caused...?", and other questions. Knowing as much as possible about the cause of a teacher's behavior, and understanding his or her own behavior keeps a principal from making the wrong decision...or...at least it lessens the chances for a wrong decision.

The greatest benefit to the school system seemed to be that the support system helped principals make the "right" decision. Striving for the right decision was important because it, at least, provided some guarantee that teachers received fair and just treatment. The support system was also important because of some measure of assurance it provided for principals that they were "not alone" or "out on a limb" and that they would be considered effective in having to perform one of the most difficult tasks they had to accomplish.

Early identification of personnel problems and coordination of the resolution of those problems were also vital elements of the procedure. Knowing who and where the problems were was a necessity if the procedure was to gain acceptance by all of the administrators and supervisors in Ridgemont. Mrs. Bridgeport explained why that was such a key component of the procedure (Field notes: 12/1979):

...you have to understand what was happening in Ridgemont at that time to understand why there couldn't be any "surprises" in the identification of problems. As I said earlier, there was very little tolerance for principals who wouldn't deal with personnel problems. By knowing who and where the unsatisfactory teachers were, I could make certain that the principals addressed the



problems--not overlook them. In order for the central office administration and supervisors to accept that proper actions were being taken, I had to assure them that I was aware of and approved the actions of the principals....Control of the procedure could only be maintained if everyone involved knew that the Director of Personnel was "on top of things" by seeing that the proper actions were taken.

Once problems were identified, coordination of the resolution of those problems were accomplished by a continual interaction by Mrs. Bridgeport with the administrators and supervisors involved as she also "walked through" the problems with them. Mrs. Bridgeport kept the appropriate Directors and Assistant Superintendents informed about the progress of each situation, trying to keep their involvement to that of an "awareness" level. When the resolution of a problem had to be accomplished beyond the school level, Mrs. Bridgeport coordinated the resolution of that problem with the appropriate individuals.

The utilization of the procedure for identifying and resolving personnel problems by the principals and supervisors was significant. Principals and supervisors reported seventy-seven personnel problems during the course of this study to the Director of Personnel. In the coordination of the procedure, Mrs. Bridgeport had numerous contacts with principals, supervisors, central office administrators, and others in the resolution of personnel problems. The majority of those contacts were face-to-face; others were by telephone. There were 224 recorded contacts with Mrs. Bridgeport; 166 of those lasted longer than five minutes, with the longest duration of time being two hours. More contacts occurred during the months of January, February, and March

than any other months during the study. Thus, a procedure for dealing with unsatisfactory performance was developed that included: (1) a support system for individuals involved in the decision making for personnel problems, and (2) early identification of unsatisfactory performance, and (3) coordination and control centralized in the Personnel Department.

#### Principals' Options for Resolving Personnel Problems

Once problems were identified, there were various courses of action taken by principals to promote the resolution of those problems. In the initial stages of a problem, principals were encouraged to use an informal conference to discuss the concern(s) with the teachers involved. If the problem could not be resolved through informal conferences, then other courses of action were available to the principals. Those actions involved:

1. scheduling formal conferences.
2. issuing written directives.
3. issuing a letter of reprimand.
4. placing a tenured teacher under evaluation during the year.
5. placing a tenured teacher under evaluation for the next year.
6. reassigning a teacher within the building.
7. recommending transfer from the building during the year.
8. recommending transfer from the building for the next year.
9. recommending suspension.

10. recommending probation for a tenured teacher.
11. recommending nonrenewal of a contract for a non-tenured teacher.
12. recommending dismissal.

The first six actions involving formal conferences, written directives, reprimands, reassignment, and evaluation were actions that the principal could initiate and carry through at the school level, unless a grievance was filed by a teacher and that grievance went beyond the school level. For the purposes of this study, the first six actions were termed Level I Actions.

The last six actions, all involving recommendations for more severe disciplinary actions, resulted in the final resolution of the problem being reached at a higher level than the school. Those actions were termed Level II Actions. The procedures for suspension, probation, nonrenewal, and dismissal were legislatively mandated and prescribed. Ridgemont's policy for involuntary transfer was applied when requests were made by principals to transfer a teacher to another school or location. Level I and Level II Actions are depicted in Figure 3 and described in the following sections.

---

Insert

Figure 3

---

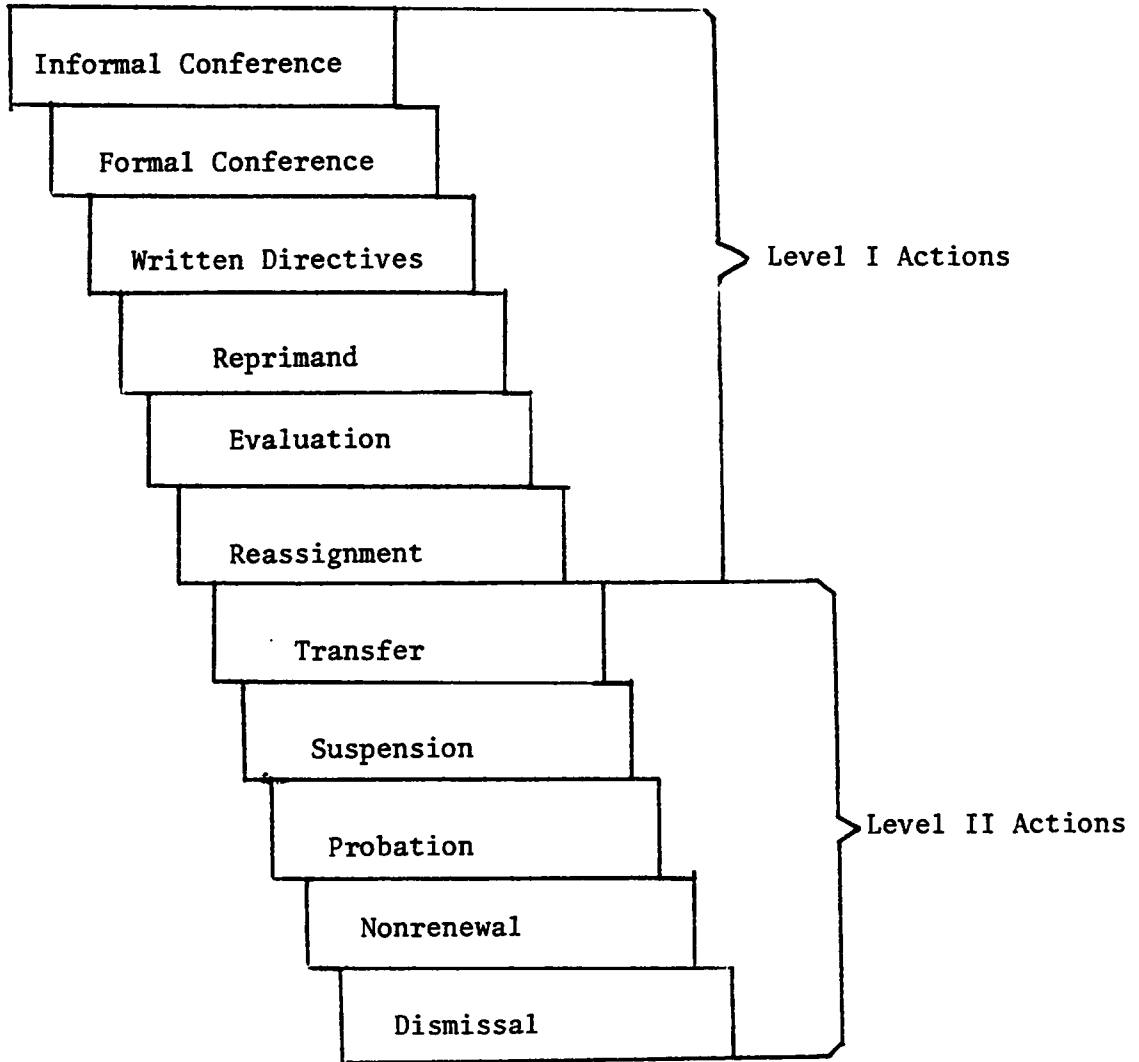


Figure 3

LEVEL I AND LEVEL II ACTIONS FOR RESOLVING  
PERSONNEL PROBLEMS IN RIDGEMONT

### Level I Actions

Level I Actions represented possible courses of actions that principals could employ to try and improve the level of performance of unsatisfactory teachers to an acceptable level. Although it was not procedurally required, most of the principals, prior to initiating Level I Actions, confirmed the validity of their proposed action(s) with Mrs. Bridgeport, thereby assuring the appropriateness of such actions.

### Formal Conference

When principals held formal conferences with teachers, they documented the event and usually gave the teacher a summary of the conference. During this study, formal conferences were scheduled when a problem could not be resolved informally, or when a serious incident occurred.

### Written Directive

A written directive served a two-fold purpose: (1) it served as a source of documentation; (2) it provided information to the teacher, limiting the chances that the teacher would misunderstand the concern(s) and/or the intent of the principal. A written directive was a signal to teachers that the inadequacies in their performance was considered to be serious by their principals.

### Written Reprimand

A written reprimand was a more serious approach for dealing with

teachers. All of the previously mentioned actions did not affect the record of teachers. A written reprimand, however, was placed in the teacher's personnel file which was maintained in the Personnel Department. Copies were also sent to the appropriate director, assistant superintendent, and to the superintendent.

### Evaluation

The formal evaluation process for Ridgemont included (1) the establishment of objectives after the teacher and principal meet to assess the teacher's performance; (2) the development of a plan of action for assessing the teacher's performance, including the number of observations and conferences and other groundrules for evaluation; (3) the completion of the evaluation process with a conference to discuss the final appraisal; and (4) the completion of a final evaluation form.

Teachers who had not attained continuing contract status were evaluated every year of their probationary status. Tenured teachers (teachers who achieved continuing contract status) could be placed under evaluation by principals when performance started "to decline". Principals had to provide sufficient evidence to support placing a teacher under evaluation. When a tenured teacher was placed under evaluation, the principal could establish the objective(s) for the teacher.

## Reassignment

Principals had the authority to assign or reassign their teachers to obtain maximum performance from teachers and to ensure the best utilization of staff in order to meet the goals of their schools. A principal could not assign a teacher to a position other than a teaching position; the principal could, however, exercise several options: (1) reassign teachers within the same grade level or department; (2) reassign teachers to another grade level or department.

## Level II Actions

Because of the nature of the Level II Actions, principals were expected to contact Mrs. Bridgeport for approval. If approved, some of the recommendations were then referred to the Assistant Superintendent of Supportive Services and/or to the Superintendent.

## Transfer

Requests made by principals to transfer teachers to another school or location fell within the school system's "Involuntary Transfer Policy". Principals had to submit a written request, specifying the reasons for the action, to the Director of Personnel. The Director was then responsible for making a determination of whether the teacher should be transferred. Moving a teacher from one school to another was an option exercised after careful consideration of whether or not the move would impede or enhance the performance of the teacher. Transfer to another school was a possible end-result of other options such as nonrenewal

dismissal, probation, and suspension.

### Suspension

Suspension was an option that applied to teachers regardless of their tenure status. The State Code clearly specified the grounds for suspension (1950:22.1-315, 150):

A teacher may be suspended for good and just cause when the safety or welfare of the school division or the students therein is threatened or when the teacher has been charged by summons, warrant, indictment or information with the commission of a felony or a crime of moral turpitude.

The Code further designated the procedures for handling suspension. In matters affecting the safety or welfare of the school system or the students a teacher could not be suspended for longer than sixty days. If a teacher was suspended for longer than five days, the teacher was entitled to written reasons and a hearing before the Ridgemont School Board. If, however, a teacher was charged with a felony or a crime of moral turpitude, the teacher could be suspended without pay until a verdict was reached by the courts. The School Board could suspend a teacher by a majority vote of a quorum of the Board.

### Probation

The State Code provided that the procedures for dismissal and probation be identical; therefore, the procedures and due process rights will be described in the section on dismissal. Probation, as an option, applied only to tenured teachers. Probation was considered by the administrators in Ridgemont as an intermediate step



to terminating a teacher's contract. It was the opinion of the School Board Attorney that probation was not necessarily a viable option because the burden of proof for probation was the same as that required for dismissal--so, the school system should pursue dismissal.

#### Nonrenewal

By State law, teachers had to serve three years in a probationary status before being eligible for tenure status. Ridgemont School Board Policy (Policy 3000) stipulated that a teacher, who had attained tenure status in another school division within the State, had to serve one probationary year in Ridgemont before being eligible for tenure.

The procedures for nonrenewal were specified in the State Code which required that a probationary teacher be notified of the nonrenewal by April fifteenth, or "...the teacher shall be entitled to a contract for the ensuing year in accordance with local salary stipulations including increments" (State Code: 1950:22.1-304). The Code further provided that a teacher was entitled to a conference and to the reasons and documentation, if any.

In Ridgemont, as soon as a principal recommended nonrenewal, the Director of Personnel scheduled a conference with the teacher. During that conference, several things were scheduled to take place: (1) the reason or reasons for the recommendation were explained and clarified, (2) the nonrenewal procedures were explained and the

options available to the teacher were delineated. The teacher could pursue a reversal of the recommendation or submit a resignation for the end of the year. Teachers were encouraged to pursue their right to a conference with the appropriate assistant superintendent. Resignation, as a teacher's option, was still a possibility after a determination regarding the recommendation. If the recommendation for non-renewal was upheld and the teacher did not resign, a final recommendation was made by the Superintendent to the School Board.

#### Dismissal

Dismissal pertained to those teachers who had earned tenure status and to probationary teachers (nontenured) whose contracts were terminated during the contract year. The State Code was specific in the reasons for dismissal (1950:22.1-307):

Teachers may be dismissed or placed on probation for incompetency, immorality, noncompliance with school rules and regulations, disability as shown by competent medical evidence, conviction of a felony or a crime of moral turpitude or other good and just cause.

In 1979, the State General Assembly placed dismissal under the State grievance procedure for teachers. Under that grievance procedure, a teacher had a right to receive the reasons for dismissal (or probation) in writing and to request a hearing before the Ridgemont School Board, a fact-finding panel, or both. Teachers also had the discretion of having a public or a private hearing. If the teacher requested a hearing before the School Board, the School Board members could opt to refer the hearing to a three-member fact finding panel. In that event,

the panel would conduct the formal hearing, review the evidence, and make a final recommendation to the School Board. The School Board would make the final decision.

Level II Actions were by their very nature more complex and difficult. "Tight" procedures were exemplary of Level II Actions and, unlike the Level I Actions, Level II Actions were written. With the exception of the transfer policy, Ridgemont County did not have written procedures for Level II Actions; they incorporated the State Code provisions as their written procedures. Unlike Level I Actions in which principals enjoyed some flexibility and were encouraged to be creative in problem resolution, Level II Actions forced everyone involved in the resolution of those actions to be very cognizant of time frames and careful to ensure exact compliance with the State procedures. The newness of some of the actions resulted in principals and central office administrators carefully studying procedures and talking with administrators in other school systems to ensure an understanding of the procedures. One procedure, the grievance procedure, caused more study and speculation than any of the other procedures.

#### The Grievance Procedure

The previously mentioned Level I and Level II Actions were options available to principals in Ridgemont as they sought to resolve prob-  
that occurred with teachers within their buildings. Two of the Level II Actions, dismissal and probation, had to be resolved through the

grievance procedure.

The grievance procedure provided a means by which teachers in Ridgemont could seek resolution of their disputes or complaints regarding their employment. The grievance procedure, legislatively mandated, was divided into two parts: Part A and Part B. Part A defined the employment matters that were or were not grievable.

The procedure was explicit about what was not grievable:

The term grievance shall not include a complaint or dispute by a teacher relating to the establishment and revision of wages or salaries, position classifications or general benefits; suspension; nonrenewal of the contract of a teacher who has not achieved continuing contract status; the establishment or contents of ordinances, statutes or personnel policies, written procedures, rules and regulations; failure to promote, discharge, layoff; or suspension from duties because of decrease in enrollment in a particular subject; insufficient funding, hiring, transfer, assignment and retention of teachers within the school division; suspension from duties in emergencies; or the methods, means, and personnel by which the school division's operations are to be carried on.

The grievance procedure provided for a four-step sequence in the resolution of grievances. The first two steps were at the school level and included an informal meeting with the principal prior to a grievance being filed; the second meeting was formal and allowed a teacher's representative to be present. The third step was with the Superintendent's designee, the Assistant Superintendent of Supportive Services, and the fourth step was a hearing before a fact finding panel or before the Ridgemont School Board.

In disputes of grievability of a matter or matters, the Ridgemont School Board had the authority to make the determination of grievability within ten days after receiving the request from the Superintendent.

A teacher could appeal the School Board's decision regarding grievability by appealing the matter to the Circuit Court in Ridgemont County. The Court could reverse, modify, or accept the decision of the School Board within fifteen days after a hearing by the Circuit Court Judge. As the next chapter will show, only one determination of grievability was made by the Circuit Court Judge. Ridgemont's School Board members had to rule on the grievability of administrative transfer. Never before had the School Board been faced with a decision of grievability determination. As a result, various members of the Board expressed uncertainty about procedure, concern about setting precedents, and uneasiness over decision making in such matters. The same feelings and concerns were expressed by the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent of Supportive Services, and other central office administrators.

During the study, the Superintendent and staff members directly involved in processing grievances were concerned about the emphasis being placed on the rights of teachers and the encouragement they were receiving to use the grievance procedure. The Ridgemont Education Association published articles in the association's newsletter emphasizing the need for such a vehicle for resolving disputes. It should be noted, however, that the only grievances filed during the year were by teachers who were being recommended for Level II Actions--nonrenewal and transfer to another school.

During the flurry of grievances, the Assistant Superintendent

of Supportive Services commented on the availability of another option for teachers as a means of settling problems. That option involved meeting with central office staff members, even the Superintendent, and the School Board, if teachers chose to. His comment was made in a meeting that included the Superintendent, two other Assistant Superintendents, the Directors of Instruction, and the Director of Personnel. Although everyone in the meeting nodded in agreement, it was pointed out by the Director of Personnel that teachers, for the most part, were not aware of that option. There was no mention of that alternative in any manual published by the system. The consensus of the group was to leave things "informal"; if teachers wanted to talk with any of them, they would allow the teachers to do so. No further discussion was held on that issue during the year.

#### Summary

Principals in Ridgemont were highly involved in the personnel function of (1) identification of new staff, (2) orientation of new staff, (3) assignment of staff, (4) staff development, and (5) evaluation of staff, which received a great deal of emphasis in Ridgemont. The emphasis on "weeding out" unsatisfactory teachers created an over involvement of central office staff in identifying unsatisfactory performance. The dynamics of that over-involvement created problems in the working relationships between principals and supervisors that would have lasting effects.

Principals were also faced with a new surge of laws and regulations

that placed constraints on their management of teachers. These were evidenced in state mandated procedures for terminating teacher contracts, disciplinary procedures for suspension and probation, and a grievance procedure that was used more than any previous year in the history of the school system.

A combination of external and internal constraints created the need for a formal procedure for identifying and resolving personnel problems. The components of the procedure were described, as well as the options available to principals in the resolution of their problems stemming from unsatisfactory teacher performance.

CHAPTER VI  
THE PROBLEM OF THE UNSATISFACTORY TEACHER  
IN RIDGEMONT SCHOOL SYSTEM

...no situation or event exists as a problem in exactly the same way for every observer, for every organization...Situations or events become problems for someone when they are defined as such. Situations and events become problems when they violate a standard or goal for someone. To be a problem at all a situation or event must be a problem for someone; therefore, all problems are human problems. There are no problems unless they are defined as such by someone.

Elbing (1978:12)

During the course of the 1979-1980 school year, principals at all levels of the principalship in Ridgemont School System encountered numerous teachers whose performance was deemed unsatisfactory by the principals or others, such as parents, students, supervisors, central office administrators, and even the superintendent. This chapter illustrates the nature of those problems and describes the dynamics involved as principals attempted to resolve the problems. More specifically, a model of decision making, representing the full spectrum of the identification resolution process, is used as a means of analysis of the behavior of principals during the five phases of that model: identifying personnel problems, analyzing the problems, defining the problems, selecting alternative actions, and implementing the selected actions, especially during the crucial



period of the identification-resolution period. As defined in an earlier chapter, the identification-resolution period is that period of time from the identification of a problem until its resolution.

#### Nature And Classification Of Personnel Problems In Ridgemont School System

The problems confronting principals during this study were varied in nature and gravity. Some problems were resolved without a great deal of difficulty; others resulted in the termination of teacher contracts, primarily in the form of forced resignations. The number and the diversity of problems dictated that the researcher categorize the problems into a workable framework. The researcher, therefore, grouped the personnel problems using the assumption that any of the problems could have resulted in the ultimate outcome--termination of employment. No distinction was made between tenured and non-tenured teachers in the classification of problems. Inasmuch as the State law was explicit regarding the grounds upon which a teacher's contract could be terminated, the problems were categorized to coincide with the reasons for dismissal, as specified in the State Code. Those reasons included incompetency, immorality, noncompliance with school rules and regulations, disability, conviction of a felony or a crime of moral turpitude, or other good and just cause.

The personnel problems identified during 1979-1980 fell within four of the six reasons for dismissal: incompetency, immorality, noncompliance with school rules and regulations, and other good and just

cause. Incompetency was the largest category with forty-four problems; immorality ranked second with six problems; noncompliance with school rules and regulations involved two problems; other good and just cause was fourth with only one problem being identified. A definition of the dismissal reason and a brief synopsis of the problems found in each category exemplify the diversity of the personnel problems principals dealt with in the day-to-day operation of their schools. Each case has been assigned a reference number which will appear throughout the text in parenthesis (#1). A brief description of each personnel problem is presented in Appendix A.

### Incompetency

Incompetency, according to Funk and Wagnalls (1963:681), may be described as "lacking in ability or skill; inadequate to the task; incapable; unfit". The term inadequate is further defined as "not adequate, not equal to that which is required; insufficient" (Funk and Wagnalls, 1963:678). According to American Jurisprudence (68 AM JUR 2nd 162:495):

A teacher, although employed for a fixed term, may be discharged at any time by a school board for incompetency or for negligence in the discharge of duties. The term 'incompetency' and 'inefficiency' are closely allied, if not synonymous, in that both terms connote a lack of some requisite ability.

Although the circumstances surrounding each personnel problem were different, the nature of the problems themselves was often similar. The similarities allowed the researcher to group the problems of incompetency into three areas of deficiency: skills, attitudes,

and relationships. As Figure illustrates, the largest single category of problems for the principals resulted from insufficient skills on the part of teachers in Ridgemont School System. There were fifty-eight occurrences of skill deficiencies in that category; the most common deficiencies being inadequate classroom control, ineffective presentation of material, and lack of organization. The remainder of unsatisfactory behaviors, 44 occurrences, were tied directly to attitude and relationships. The nature of the problems and the specific personnel cases in which the deficiencies were identified are presented next.

---

Insert

Figure 4

---

### Skills

The deficiencies attributed to a lack of skills included:

1. inadequate class control (#1), (#4), (#8), (#9), (#10), (#11), (#21), (#25), (#26), (#27), (#28), (#29), (#31), (#35), (#37), (#46), (#51);
2. ineffective presentation of material (#4), (#8), (#26), (#27), (#28), (#31), (#34), (#37), (#51);
3. lack of organization (#8), (#11), (#28), (#34), (#35), (#36), (#51);

NATURE OF PROBLEM	FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE
<b>I. <u>SKILL</u></b>	
Inadequate Classroom Control	17
Ineffective Presentation of Material	9
Lack of Organization	7
Inadequate Knowledge of Content	5
Inadequate Planning	4
Improper Evaluation of Students	3
Inadequate Record Keeping	3
Inadequate Evaluation/Diagnosis	3
Incorrect Usage of English Language	2
Inadequate Supervision of Class	2
Lack of/or Poor Judgment	2
Inadequate Materials	1
	<u>58</u>
<b>II. <u>ATTITUDE</u></b>	
Unwillingness to Accept Criticism	5
Lack of Effort/Concern	3
Resistance to Curriculum	3
Failure to Meet Deadlines	2
Excessive Absenteeism	2
Resistance to Change	1
Late to Work/Class	1
Dissatisfaction with Assignment	1
Failure to Upgrade Skills	1
Improper Use of Work Time	1
	<u>20</u>
<b>III. <u>RELATIONSHIPS</u></b>	
Inadequate Relationship with Peers	10
Inadequate Relationship with Students	6
Inadequate Relationship with Administrators	3
Inadequate Relationship with Community	3
	<u>22</u>

Figure 4

THE NATURE AND FREQUENCY OF PROBLEMS  
OF INCOMPETENCY IN RIDGEMONT

4. inadequate knowledge of subject content (#5), (#8), (#26), (#27), (#35);
5. inadequate planning (#34), (#35), (#46), (#48);
6. improper evaluation of students (#15), (#26), (#15);
7. inadequate record keeping (#15), (#36), (#50);
8. inadequate evaluation and diagnosis (#4), (#5), (#33);
9. incorrect usage of English language (#15), (#51);
10. inadequate supervision of class (#20), (#35);
11. judgment (#15), (#51);
12. inadequate materials (#15)

#### Attitude

Attitude problems of teachers encompassed the following:

1. unwillingness to accept constructive criticism (#9), (#30), (#38), (#39), (#44), (#49);
2. lack of effort or concern (#4), (#6), (#46);
3. resistance to curriculum (#38), (#39), (#40);
4. failure to meet deadlines (#12), (#50);
5. excessive absenteeism (#20), (#26);
6. resistance to change (#30);
7. late to work and/or class (#20);
8. dissatisfaction with assignment (#22);
9. failure to upgrade skills (#5);
10. improper use of work time (#27)

### Relationships

A lack of rapport and/or unsatisfactory relationships with members of the school system, students, and members of the community were demonstrated as follows:

1. peers (#2), (#12), (#20), (#26), (#27), (#32), (#33), (#49), (#50), (#52);
2. students (#12), (#20), (#25), (#29), (#31), (#44);
3. school administrators (#38), (#39), (#47);
4. parents and members of community (#31), (#42), (#44).

### Immorality

Immorality has been defined (68 AM JUR 2nd 176:510; Delon, 1977: 56-61) as a "course of conduct which offends the morals of the community and is a bad example to the youth whose ideals a teacher is supposed to foster and to elevate". During the school year, there were four separate instances of immorality issues involving six teachers:

1. Two unmarried teachers (#13), (#14) were living together in the school community in which they both taught.
2. Two married teachers (#2), (#3) were suspected of having an affair with one another.
3. A male high school teacher (#19) admitted that he was living with one of his female students.
4. A female high school teacher (#21) was accused of directing an "obscene" remark toward a male student in her classroom.

### Noncompliance with School Rules and Regulations

The courts have held that a teacher "is bound to obey all reasonable rules and regulations of the board which employs him..." (Edwards, 1971:481-483; 68 AM JUR 2nd 166:499). After repeated warnings from their respective principals, two teachers continued to disregard directives that they were in violation of school regulations contained in their school handbooks:

1. A high school industrial arts teacher (#20) continued to leave his classes improperly supervised.
2. An elementary art teacher (#35) failed to provide the required lesson plans.

### Other Good and Just Cause

Courts have ruled (68 AM JUR 2nd 183:514-515) that in cases of "good and just cause", the cause may include:

...any grounds put forward by a school committee in good faith and which is not arbitrary, irrational, unreasonable, or irrelevant to the committee's task of building up and maintaining an efficient school system...the jurisdiction and discretion to determine what these causes may be rests in the hands of the school authorities.

In 1979, a professional ethics issue was raised in Ridgemont when an elementary teacher (#53) acknowledged that he had taught the contents of a standardized achievement test to his classes, prior to the test being officially administered.

Distribution of Personnel Problems In  
Ridgemont School System

During the course of the 1979-1980 school year there were seventy-seven personnel problems involving unsatisfactory teachers reported to the Director of Personnel by either the principals or the subject area supervisors. Fifty-three of those problems were recognized by the school principals and, therefore, included as part of this study.

As stated in an earlier chapter, Ridgemont School System employed forty principals to manage the schools within the system. Over sixty percent, or twenty-five, of those principals were included in this study as they identified and attempted to resolve teacher problems. Of the twenty-five principals, eleven were elementary, six were middle school principals, and eight were high school principals

Secondary principals (middle and high school) identified more unsatisfactory teachers during the period under study than the elementary principals did for the same time period. Thirty-two problems were identified by the secondary principals; high school principals were involved in twenty of the thirty-two problems.

While the majority of principals had one or two unsatisfactory teachers, there were three principals, one on each level of the principalship, who experienced as many as five or six personnel problems within the year. The number of principals on each principalship level who experienced unsatisfactory teachers was as follows: elementary - 11 out of 23; middle - 6 out of 8; and high - 8 out of 9. Although there were fewer principals on the secondary level, this group



was involved in the largest number of decisions regarding unsatisfactory teachers.

Figure 5 clearly illustrates that unsatisfactory teachers were found on all levels of schools within the Ridgemont School System. The highest concentration of problems occurred on the elementary and high school levels. Incompetency accounted for the largest portion of problems reported during the year with the elementary schools experiencing the largest number of problems. Problems of immorality, on the other hand, were localized within the secondary schools; twice as many problems were reported on the high school level.

	Incompetency	Immorality	Noncompliance	Good/Just Cause
Elementary	19		1	1
Middle	10	2		
High	15	4	1	
Total	44	66	2	1

Figure 5

DISTRIBUTION OF PROBLEMS BY CATEGORY  
AND SCHOOL LEVEL IN RIDGEMONT

The diversity and complexity of the problems confronting Ridgemont principals leads the researcher to an awareness of the need for effective decision making. The critical nature of decisions that

must often be made about teachers whose performance fails to measure up to an acceptable standard cannot be underestimated. Making decisions is central to the management of a school, and making sound personnel decisions is vital to the effectiveness of principals, the success of their schools, and especially to the teachers affected by those decisions. Because of the high expectations for and pressures placed on Ridgemont principals, it was essential for them to be recognized as good managers and, therefore, good decision makers as those decisions related to the unsatisfactory teacher.

#### The Identification Resolution Process

The consensus of writers in the field portray decision making as a choice between alternatives. Griffiths (1959:202) describes decision making as "...the process which one goes through in order to pass judgment and terminate a controversy". Lipham and Hoeh (1974: 155) state that "decision making is a process wherein an awareness of a problematic state of a system, influenced by information and values, is reduced to competing alternatives among which a choice is made based on perceived outcome states of the system". Others (Alfonso, Firth, and Neville, 1981:197) liken the decision making process in nature and quality to thinking "...for in its elements are arrayed the entire gamut of the processes which are the foundations of human thought: observation, perception, knowledge, and analysis....The states of mind and action pertaining to these processes are prerequisites to human rationality...".

Rationality in decision making implies the selection of appropriate means to reach desired ends (Simon, 1976). In other words, a decision maker who acts rationally is more apt to reach the "right" decision when dealing with unsatisfactory teachers. There are, however, a number of factors that interfere with "optimizing" when principals are confronted with decisions regarding unsatisfactory performance of teachers. Bounded by their own limitations and the organization itself, principals, at best, strive to make decisions that are acceptable. The behavior of principals during the decision making process is determined by their perception of a given situation and/or of a particular individual. Rarely are perceptions objective. In fact, Cribbin (1981:82) writes, "Nothing is so successful in making fact fiction, and fiction fact, as perception". Effectiveness of principals in decision making is diminished unless principals are vigilant to perceive accurately and to minimize the subjective approach in perceiving others (Zalkind and Costello, 1974:235). Effective decisions can best be achieved, according to Lipham and Hoeh (1974:169-173), when principals are skilled in: (1) differentiating among types of decisions, (2) determining the amount and type of information needed to reach a decision, (3) determining the appropriate involvement of other people in reaching decisions, (4) establishing priorities for actions, and (5) anticipating both intended and unintended consequences of decisions.

The importance of perception and information gathering throughout

the decision process is emphasized in the decision models of Janis and Mann (1977), Elbing (1978), and Castetter (1981). Janis and Mann (1977) stress the importance of information gathering as a means of avoiding post-decisional conflict through the utilization of "Vigilant Information Processing". Elbing's (1978) management decision model is deeply immersed in looking at the decision maker as an individual and at the factors that influence decisions. Elbing (1978) places a strong emphasis on roadblocks to perception processing and information gathering and outlines criteria needed for successful completion of each phase in the decision model. Castetter's (1981) "Performance Effectiveness Process Model" is designed as a means of identifying unsatisfactory performance of employees and making appropriate decisions regarding that behavior. Both Elbing's (1978) and Castetter's (1981) models are presented in Appendix B. From those two models, the researcher adapted the following model from which to analyze the decision making behavior of principals in Ridgemont School System as they dealt with unsatisfactory teachers. The model and a brief description of its five steps are presented in Figure 6 . The model is termed the Identification Resolution Process. An analysis of the principals' behaviors during the decision process is presented in the following sections

---

Insert

Figure 6

---

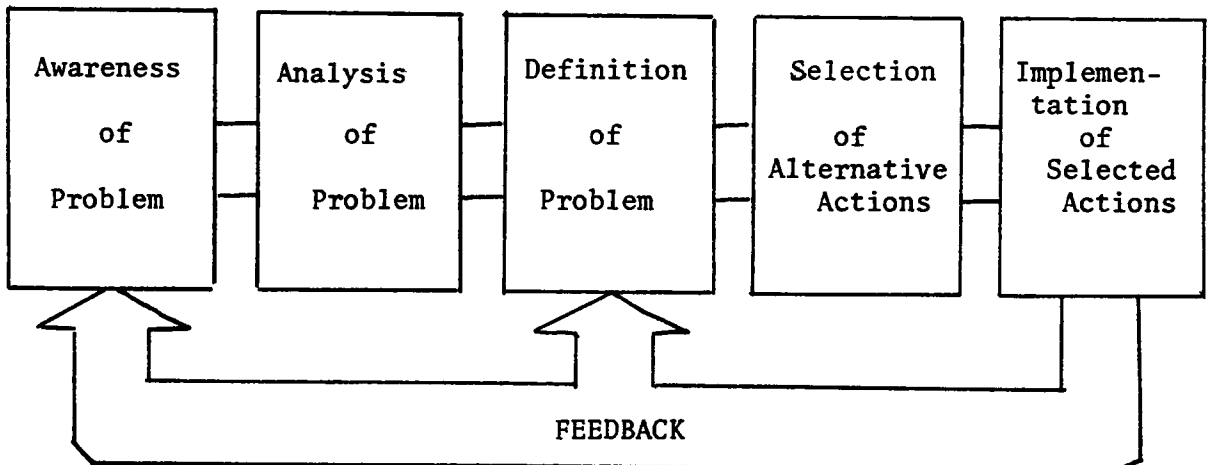


Figure 6

### THE IDENTIFICATION RESOLUTION PROCESS

The major steps in the Identification Resolution Process include:

- Step 1 - Awareness of Problem - The actual recognition that a problem exists, that a teacher's performance is not adequate or that behavior is inappropriate is the foundation of the decision process
- Step 2 - Analysis of Problem - The search for information to answer the questions "Who?" "What?" "Where?" "When?" and "Why?"
- Step 3 - Definition of Problem - Based on the gathering of adequate factual data regarding a teacher performance, the specifics of the problem are stated.
- Step 4 - Selection of Alternative Actions - Careful weighing of possible risks and outcomes to the individual, the school, and the system may generate the decision to recommend Level II Actions.
- Step 5 - Implementation of Selected Actions - The decision to retain involves development of a plan for improvement; the decision to remove from the system involves termination procedures. Consideration is given to voluntary withdrawal from the system on the part of the teacher.

### Step 1 - Awareness of Problem

As indicated earlier, the first step in the decision process involves the recognition that a discrepancy exists, that a teacher's performance is not adequate or that behavior is inappropriate. To state that this step is perhaps the most crucial phase of the decision process may be unnecessary; it is, however, at this step in the process that problems are created as well as identified. Such a statement warrants clarification.

Recognition of unsatisfactory teacher performance or behavior arises from two sources--the principal or the environment. Most decision making models assume that managers will recognize discrepancies in their employees. All too frequently, managers do not know a discrepancy exists, or if congruency exists, managers often do not take the time to search for problems (March and Simon, 1958; Webber, 1977). Being able to recognize disequilibrium is vital to the effectiveness of principals. At the same time, how principals perceive discrepancies in behavior and performance is of equal importance.

Earlier, the importance of perception to all phases of the decision making model was emphasized. Inasmuch as Step 1 is where perception first comes into play, a more indepth look into perception is necessary. How a principal perceives another individual depends upon the perceptual framework of that principal. Cribben's analogy that "Behavior depends on perceptions as a door depends on its hinges" (1981:82) emphasizes the importance of perception. The

perceptual framework of a principal is dependent upon such factors as values, intelligence, needs, beliefs, fears, past experiences, and training, as well as external variables such as "...who in the formal or informal structure has the 'ear' of the decision maker, reputations of others for supplying reliable input, mutual respect for divergent points of views, and the exercise of political or power relationships..." (Lipham and Hoeh, 1974:159). Various writers on perception (Zalkind and Costello, 1974; Cribben, 1981; Hellriegel and Slocum, 1976; Elbing, 1978; and O'Reilly, 1982) outline the pitfalls in perceiving others; they stress the importance of self awareness on the part of principals regarding their perceptual frameworks, thereby avoiding arbitrary judgments. Perceptual distortions, biases, fear, and anxiety often cause principals to "react" to situations or behaviors.

The recognition of the complexity and unpredictability of human behavior and the necessity for objectivity, gave rise in organizations to the establishment of rules and regulations which might anticipate or ward off causes of disequilibrium. Routines were established to increase the likelihood that principals would behave in a traditionally rational way (O'Reilly, 1983:110).

Within Ridgemont School System, rules and regulations were established to thwart potential unsatisfactory behavior of teachers. Deviations from those prescribed standards provided cues to the principals that a state of disequilibrium existed, that a problem

isted, that a problem existed. The central administration issued some of those regulations, such as those regarding contractual duties and performance standards. Some of the expectations for performance standards were unwritten, such as the superintendent's frequent statements to principals about his expectations for teachers' use of sick leave. On two occasions, he informed principals that the number of days a probationary teacher was absent was to be a determinant of contract continuation. Other rules were established by principals and placed in school handbooks. These related to such matters as requirements for lesson plans, procedures for substitutes, clerical matters, duties within the building, and for a few schools, a dress-code. Finally, some behaviors were even legislated, such as morality. State regulations covered certification expectations for teachers. All of the established rules and regulations served as yardsticks for performance expectations and provided a legitimacy to the subsequent actions taken by principals.

Because all behavior cannot be predetermined, sources of disequilibrium cannot always be anticipated and, therefore be covered by rules and regulations. Conflicts between teachers, between teachers and students, between teachers and parents, a teacher's lack of judgment, a teacher's inability to control student behavior, and emotional outbursts by teachers all represented unanticipated signals of disequilibrium for principals in Ridgemont School System during this study. Elbing (1978:46) suggests "it is sensitivity to unstructured



messages and knowledge about behavior that enables the manager to initiate a decision-making process at the appropriate time". Such perceptions were often signaled by a comment overheard in the cafeteria, body language, change in attitude, or even the indefinable feeling that something was "not right".

The effectiveness of Ridgemont principals as evaluated by their superiors, was determined by the principals' abilities to recognize potential teacher problems, as opposed to having others identify those problems for them. Principals who did not perceive problems, or who were forced to react to a problem perceived by others, risked censure, pressure, and resultant stress in dealing with such problems. One principal had a reputation for allowing "weak" teachers to continue to teach without recognizing or attempting to address the discrepancy. Supervisors often felt it was futile to try to discuss a teacher's performance with him because he never took action. This was true of one particular teacher (#34) who was eligible for continuing contract status at the end of the 1979-1980 school year. Believing the teacher should not be given such status, the supervisors attempted to persuade the principal to recommend nonrenewal. During that same period of time, parents were also concerned about the teacher and had also met with the principal to discuss their concerns. When the principal did not respond to their concerns, the parents visited the assistant superintendent and expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the teacher and their perceptions of un-

responsiveness of the principal. As a result, the principal was called in for a formal conference, placed under evaluation, and given a directive by the assistant superintendent and the superintendent to place the teacher under evaluation and address the specific performance deficiencies. The principal was then given a written reprimand to "open lines of communication with supervisors", and instructed that if there were future disagreements about recommendations for continuing contract status of teachers, the superintendent "would exercise his prerogative and make the decision (Field notes: 4/1980). The teacher was given continuing contract status because the deadline for nonrenewal recommendations (April 15th) passed before the involvement of the superintendent or the Director of Personnel. The principal made his first contact with the Director of Personnel to report the problem two days after the conference.

The emphasis on performance and the involvement of supervisors in the assessment of teacher performance heightened the chances that unsatisfactory performance would be identified. This is evidenced by the fact that fifty-three problems were included in this study (Figure 7 ). Although the principals acknowledged all of the problems, they were not always the first individuals to perceive the specific problem, or they may have been aware of the problem but took no action prior to the problem being identified by another source. The individual(s) who perceived the discrepancy in teacher performance or behavior and then acknowledged that perception verbally or in writ-

ten form were given credit as the source of identification. As Figure 7 indicates, of the 53 personnel problems 29 were identified by principals, and the remaining 24 problems were identified by other sources, specifically supervisors, parents, students, teachers, or central office administrators. Of the problems identified by principals, 14 resulted in Level II Actions, such as transfer, nonrenewal, dismissal, probation, and suspension. Of the remaining 24 problems, 10 resulted in Level II Actions being initiated.

Figure 7

Source Of Identification Of Unsatisfactory  
Teacher Performance In Ridgemont

SOURCE	NUMBER OF PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED	LEVEL II ACTIONS
Principal	29	14
Supervisor	6	4
Parents/Students	11	5
Teachers	5	1
Central Office	2	0
Total	53	24

Principals responded with a sense of immediacy when personnel problems were identified by other sources. In each of these cases, immediate attention was given to the perceived discrepancy in the form of a conference with the teachers in question. It is of inter-

est that in all of the personnel problems identified by others, principals were either cognizant of the reported deficiencies (#2), (#3), (#4), (#5), (#7), (#8), (#13), (#14), (#19), (#21), (#26), (#29), (#31), (#34), (#35), (#37), (#42), (#51), or they had previously dealt with the teachers in other matters related to performance discrepancies (#15), (#21), (#32), (#41), (#49), (#50).

Some of the problems identified were "one timer's", meaning that after the initial acknowledgment of a discrepancy, no further evidence existed that the problems went beyond the identification stage. Two of the high school principals felt they had to "live with" certain of their teachers, even though they were not satisfied with the teachers' behaviors. According to the principals, their teachers, five of them (#16), (#17), (#18), (#23), (#24) were not inadequate as teachers, but their personalities did not endear them to the principals, who described them individually as a "pain" a "know-it-all", the "worst of pessimists", and "unbending", and a "real dud".

Principals' perceptions of personnel problems are based on their perceptual framework and the environment. Their willingness to take action on a problem is greatly influenced by the source of identification of the problem and the nature of the problem. Once identified, an analysis of the cause of the unsatisfactory performance or behavior became the second most important step of the decision process.

## Step 2 - Analysis of Problem

It is at this stage in the decision model that every effort should be made to determine the factor or factors contributing to the unsatisfactory performance and/or behavior of teachers. Successful analysis depends upon the extent to which principals are able to provide factual answers to the questions: Who? Why? What? When? and Where? Although analysis requires careful and systematic collection and processing of information, there is a tendency for managers to place action ahead of diagnosis (Webber, 1975:27). In doing so, managers bypass thorough diagnosis and act on the basis of "rather sketchy diagnostic assumptions" (Elbing, 1978:74).

Drucker speaks to that tendency (1969:397):

People inevitably start out with an opinion; to ask them to search for the facts is impossible and undesirable. They simply do what everyone is far too prone to do anyhow: look for the facts that fit the conclusion they have already reached. And no one has ever failed to find the facts he is looking for.

Not only is this a time when individual principals must be attuned to their own perceptual frameworks, their "realities" of their environments, but they must weigh carefully the impact of time constraints and the influence of others in their analysis of problems. Castetter (1981:294) contends that analysis should be implemented so that "...the effects of power, sympathy, bias, group pressure, and authority are minimized". Central to the analysis process is another realization. "People" problems are not, for the most part simple. The underlying cause of why a teacher is performing at

level "x" instead of level "y" is often obscured. Failure to determine the cause or causes of unsatisfactory performance may lead to a faulty definition, and, ultimately, to inadequate resolutions being applied to symptoms and not to the underlying cause or causes of the problem. Only as principals become proficient in the analysis of personnel problems stemming from unsatisfactory performance or behavior is there any assurance that the "right" decision has been made. The right decision is, hopefully, right for the teacher and the school system.

The inherent difficulties in analysis of unsatisfactory performance of teachers by principals in Ridgemont were evidenced in this study. The quality of analysis, the gathering and processing of information, was affected by the principals perceptions of the nature and complexity of the unsatisfactory performance, and the influences exerted by others in the school system. The nature and complexity of the unsatisfactory performance or behavior appeared to have a direct bearing on how the principals gathered and processed information to determine why the problem existed. When the principal's job security or status were perceived as being threatened, or when the principal's values and expectations were perceived as being in conflict with those of the organization, principals most often yielded to organizational goals. Insecurity gave rise to anxiety, the analysis became muddled, and the teacher became the culprit.

Analysis of personnel problems tended to be more routine in

nature as long as the cause or causes of the problems were tied to inadequacies in instructional skills on the part of the teacher, and the teacher's attitude and relationships with others was favorable. In such cases, analysis seemed to run smoothly. Analysis seemed particularly conflict free when teachers acknowledged their weaknesses and were receptive to advice and assistance from their principals and others. In those cases, principals employed the usual routine of having supervisors work directly with the teachers to determine the specific areas of deficiencies and suggesting and monitoring methods for improvement of performance. Such cases (#1), (#10), (#28), and (#46), were characterized by a positive routine analysis process. When problems were tied to issues of morality or noncompliance with organizational regulations, analysis was virtually conflict free and limited in scope because the determination of cause was not relevant. Analysis, however, was often short circuited when teachers exhibited attitudinal behaviors or experienced relationship problems with others. Such problems were by their very nature threatening to the status quo of the schools, and the principal's analysis was often hampered by biases, errors in judgment, and anxiety.

Outside influences, in the form of letters from parents, support or lack of support from supervisors, visits from parents and central office personnel, were another source of interference that at times either pressured principals into acting before analysis was complete, affected whether or not principals sought additional information, or

had some negative impact on the processing of information.

As previously indicated, some of the observed tendencies of principals that caused breakdowns in the analysis of their problems included: (1) "reacting" to situations by plowing headlong into selecting solutions, (2) treating symptoms rather than causes, (3) having less tolerance for teachers whose values conflict or who generate negative personal feelings in the principal, (4) reacting when the status quo of the school was threatened by central office or the community, and (5) tailoring their actions according to what they perceive the superintendent would have done. The majority of problems involved premature judgments, failure to seek sufficient information, or using only the information principals felt would strengthen their predetermined decision.

Particular problems have been selected that show some of the breakdowns in the analysis process. It is not the intent of the researcher to propose that these illustrations are inclusive of all the possible difficulties encountered by principals; they are, however, representative of the difficulties observed by the researcher in her interaction with the principals and others, as principals engaged in the analysis process.

An example of problem analysis impeded by inadequate data collection and the use of selected information to confirm a premature decision, is that of a high school principal who called the Director of Personnel in the middle of March. He informed the director that



he had just finished a conversation with four students who alleged that their math teacher (#21) had made the remarks "f\_\_k you" and "I don't give a damn what you do" to one or more students in her class. He asked if he could suspend her for the incident, if necessary, in order for an investigation to be conducted. Permission was granted. As indicated in an earlier chapter, suspension up to five days was possible without reasons having to be given.

The next day, the Director of Personnel, at the request of the principal, met with him at his school for the purpose of discussing the incident. The principal recalled the conversation, from the previous day, with the teacher in which she stated that the incident started when she gave a student a detention for throwing paper across the room. When the student picked up the detention, he said "f\_\_k you". She said the remark was directed toward her. The teacher admitted saying loud enough for the class to hear, "No one is going to say "f\_\_k you" to me". When she was told the other students said she made the comment, "I don't give a damn what you do anymore," she had no recollection of that statement. The principal commented:

She tried to justify her behavior by saying that no one is made of concrete. They can be expected to slip once in awhile. I told her as far as I was concerned, that she was out of line in having said the words, and I feel we are justified in suspending her.

Later during the same day, the principal called the Director to report on interviews she conducted with students who were in the class in question. Those interviews were taped. The principal

commented:

According to the kids, the particular comment was made by Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ twice. About 4 or 5 of the kids say that she said it three times. About half of them say that the second time she directed the comment to the class. They said the first time she said it she only said "You're not going to say 'f\_\_k you' to me!" But, they said the other time she did say it back to him. As far as I'm concerned, I don't want her back up here!

The Director went to the school and listened to the tape recording of the interviews with the students. Only six students were interviewed. According to the principal they were students who were seated near the teacher and the student when the incident occurred. Little credence was placed in the testimony of the students by the Director for two reasons. First of all, the students were not asked to give their own account of what occurred in the classroom; they were asked if they heard the teacher say the words "f\_\_k you" in class. Secondly, when the Director questioned the principal about the students, he acknowledged that only about half of the students on the tape were "trustworthy".

Two days after the incident occurred, a conference was scheduled with the teacher, at the request of the teacher. According to the teacher, the incident began when some of the students in her ninth grade math class came into the room and moved their chairs against the wall, a practice that the principal did not want. When the students ignored her request for them to place the chairs back in their original positions, she went to the students and made them move the chairs. The teacher described what happened next:

TE: I made them put them (chairs) back, and, just in defiance, he (student) told me he was mad, and he threw a piece of paper all the way to the front of the room from the back of the room to another student. I told him I was going to give him a detention for that because he knew better. You know...and...that's when he said what he said, "f\_k you". I told him I was going to write the detention and put on it what he said and send him to see Mr. \_\_\_ and Mr. \_\_\_ (assistant principals). I went up there (to her desk) and told him to come up there, and he didn't. He stayed in the back of the room and talked to some of his little friends. I finally got him up to the front and that's when I was fussing at him. That's when I said what I said.

DP: What did you say?

TE: When he (student) told me he did not say "f\_k you", but "it", I said that he did say "f\_k you" and that nobody was going to say "f\_k you" to me... (pause)... I know I shouldn't have repeated what he said, but I did before I thought about it.

DP: What happened after that?

TE: He left and I fussed on the students. I said everyone was going to have to straighten up. That type of thing had to stop. If they wanted to learn anything and pass they would have to stop throwing things and acting silly. It helped a lot fussing with them like that.

DP: Did you use the word "damn" during the class?

TE: No ma'm. I only said what I told you earlier.

Further conversation with the teacher revealed that other problems had occurred during the past year and earlier in this year that made the principal "angry". It was also discovered that the principal notified the teacher several weeks prior to the incident that he did not plan to renew her contract for the next year. She said:

I didn't even ask him why. I didn't think there was much point in it...he couldn't tell me he hated my guts, but he does...I just looked at him. Now, this time...he wants to believe the kids because he wants me out of there. This time

I did say something to him. I said "No one is made out of concrete. Everybody's got feelings and emotions, and everybody gets upset once in awhile." I should have told him how he gets upset every time I had to walk in that office...but, I didn't.

When the Director called the principal to share the teacher's account of the incident, the principal told the Director that he did not want the teacher back in his school. He acknowledged that he was going to recommend nonrenewal because of all the "problems" he had with the teacher. He was determined, however, to take swifter action by recommending dismissal based on the "evidence on the tape".

In part, some of the principal's "jumping the gun" may have been due to negative feelings generated by previous encounters over the teacher's performance. While two cases do not form a pattern, this principal reacted in a similar fashion to another case this same year. A department head for social studies reported to the principal that the reading teacher (#22) was not teaching an assigned social studies class, and that the teacher said she was not teaching social studies because "the assistant principal said I didn't have to". The principal called the Director of Personnel to report the problem:

PR: Are you aware of our problem here?

DP: I'm not certain. Do you want to explain?

PR: We had too many history teachers at the beginning of the year. We had to cut teachers, and then we had too many students for history. Our reading specialist was endorsed in social studies. I checked with Mrs. \_\_\_ (Director of Secondary Instruction) because I needed the teacher to take 10 students and teach 6th period social studies. Mrs. \_\_\_ saw no problems.

I called Mrs. \_\_\_ (the teacher) and told her I was assigning the social studies class to her. She didn't like it, but said she "guessed she would do it".

She (teacher) later asked Mr. \_\_\_ (Assistant Principal) if she could also teach reading and combine the "two together". He said she could. Now, when the department head questioned her about why she wasn't teaching social studies, she said Mr. \_\_\_ said she didn't have to.

He immediately followed that briefing with the following statement:

PR: We had some problems with her last year. She thinks she is God's gift to (school). I'm disturbed that she isn't teaching social studies. I'm going to have a meeting and tell her she can pack her things!

DP: Now, hold on a minute. It isn't a simple matter of her packing up and leaving. You are talking about possible termination of contract. That's dismissal...

PR: You mean that I can't tell her that?

DP: You could tell her that, but...do me one favor. Be certain there is no misunderstanding on her part about the assignment and that all the facts are straight. Did the assistant principal tell her she could combine reading and social studies?

PR: Yes...but, I know what she's doing...(Pause)...All right, I'll call you back after the meeting.

Twenty minutes later, the principal called the Director of Personnel and reported the following:

PR: There was a misunderstanding. We don't think it's a misunderstanding, though. She commented to us, "If I had known I had to teach history, I would have!". She is a cool, calm lady!

Investigating the incident further, the Director talked with the social studies supervisor who told the Director that the teacher had been told to combine reading and social studies. "The ten

students were selected for that class because they had difficulties in reading", she said. The supervisor went on to explain another incident that happened earlier in the year between the teacher and the principal. Apparently teachers began to complain to the principal in October because the reading teacher had not established her rolls, and had not seen the first student. "He (principal) was furious when he found out", the supervisor said. The principal had discussed the incident with her. The Director also talked with the reading supervisor who indicated that there were some deficiencies in instructional skills. In her opinion, the teacher was "average", but she did have the tendency to "challenge and not accept constructive criticism".

Although the facts in this instance seemed to indicate a lack of communication and its resultant confusion, even when those facts were finally brought out, they seemed to make no difference in the principal's impression of the teacher.

An example of a principal, generally perceived as "highly effective", who also demonstrates the tendency to hamper analysis because of a "closed mind", exhibits a different pattern of behavior. Mr. Craxton, an elementary principal, was recognized as a caring principal, both for his teachers and students. When a teacher's (#45) manner of dealing with students and parents conflicted with his standard, his reactions clouded his analysis:

PR: I really don't know what I am going to do about her. It's her way of dealing with children and parents. She has a way of putting children down, embarrassing them in front of other children...Her judgment is not good...(Pause)...

she just flat out said to a parent that her child couldn't learn. Can you imagine that!

Several days prior to these comments being made to the Director of Personnel, the principal had observed the teacher and had given her feedback on an observation form. He commented to the Director:

PR: I'm not certain what to do about this one. I've observed her in the classroom, written up the observation, and I feel like that when I discussed my concerns it went over her head! I told her the situation was bad (his emphasis), that she was going to have to try, but I feel it went over her head. If I had said similar things to other teachers, they would have been floored by it. She did not seem upset by the rating. (Field notes: 9/1979)

The principal concluded that he had a "closed mind" when it came to that particular teacher. He did not return again to observe this teacher's performance, but did request others to assist her toward improvement.

One principal's desire to remove a teacher from his school led him to use erroneous information to justify that action. In early March, the principal of a large high school called the Director of Personnel and informed her that he was getting "a lot (his emphasis) of complaints" on one of his physical education teachers. "I'm building book", he said, but he wasn't certain that he had "enough to do anything".

The next day in a conference with the Director of Personnel, the principal and assistant principal reviewed their concerns which included instructional skills, relationship with students, and clerical competency. Based on their concerns, the principal indicated that he

wanted to know if he had enough to recommend nonrenewal. The most recent incident was filed by two female students who complained about the legibility of tests given by the teacher, the reluctance of the teacher to discuss grades with them, and the teacher's behavior of "hitting them on their bottoms". Regarding that allegation, the principal said he instructed the girls that if their parents wanted to come and see him about their concerns, he would be glad to talk with them. "The parents did come", he explained, "But, they said that if no further incidents happened they would be satisfied." He further explained that several students came to see him after the conference with the parents and said they were present when the alleged incident of hitting the girls on their "bottoms" occurred. They verified that it never happened. "I know he (teacher) was responsible for those students coming to see me". "They are some of my most reliable students," he said, "So I dropped the issue".

The principal then told the Director that the teacher's record keeping skills were "terrible". "He really messed up his bubble sheets for attendance and grades". When asked by the Director when and with what frequency those errors occurred, the principal indicated "once" and "during last year". When asked if there had been any further incidents of that nature, the principal replied, "No".

The assistant principal was quick to respond that the teacher had really "messed up" in giving grades to students. As a result of inaccurate grades given by the teacher, the assistant indicated that



twenty-seven grades had to be changed, as a result. "Why did he give incorrect grades?", the Director asked. The assistant replied, "He said he thought the students had really worked hard and deserved those grades". He went on to explain how the grades did not match the grades indicated by the teacher's gradebook. It was also discovered that this incident also occurred during the previous year. No similar incidents had happened.

Other concerns expressed by the principal pertained to the present situation. Those included incorrect use of the English language, verified by misspelled words on tests and notes sent to the principal; test materials that were barely legible; and, rigidity in working with students, as evidenced by problems in relating to some students and refusing to discuss grades with students. Observations of the teacher's classroom performance were average to above average, a fact that was borne out by the principal who said he had no problems with the teacher's expertise. The more legitimate concerns were being addressed at that time by having the department proof tests before they were administered to check for grammatical errors and quality of the copies. The rigidity of the teacher was due in part to the the fact that the teacher was German, speculated the principal.

As we talked about the current concerns, the assistant principal commented, "I don't see how anyone could be so stupid as to do the grades like he did! I really don't...I really don't think he's very intelligent".

In this case, the principal was still accepting and reporting non-factual information as well as information of performance errors from a previous year which had long since been corrected. Although the principal dropped his pursuit of nonrenewal, behaving as though he were merely "testing the waters", simultaneously, additional information came to the Director of Personnel that a hidden agenda in the principal's efforts to remove the teacher might have been to bring a more favored teacher, within the building, into the physical education program which was already fully staffed.

Personal biases in favor of student opinions and a perception of a negative attitude by the teacher, allowed a principal to stop the information processing at the level of determining the symptoms rather than seeking causes. Having received a number of student complaints about a math teacher (#29), a high school principal called the Director of Personnel with a sense of urgency about remedying the situation. He stated that there had been complaints for several years from students about "not liking" the teacher and "wanting out of" her classes. He had known about those complaints as an assistant principal in the school, a position he held until the beginning of the 1979-1980 school year when he became principal. He felt the problem had been existence too long and he wanted to discuss the situation with the Director.

Several days later at the school, the Director met with the principal and two of the assistant principals to determine the extent of the problem. The principal showed the Director handwritten notes

reflecting students' concerns. There were approximately fifteen student complaints covering a three year period of time. According to the principal, one incident that somewhat put the "icing on the cake" occurred several days before when several students stole the teacher's keys to her classroom. After investigating the situation and locating the students involved, the reason given by the students for their action concerned the principal. Apparently, the students took the keys and every morning opened the teacher's room with the intent of "working on her mind". There were other instances in which students threw pennies and metal screws in the room, especially against the venetian blinds to make noise. The teacher was never able to identify the students who were responsible for such actions, but she sent students "individually, or in groups to the office".

The principal was especially concerned when he discussed the latest situation involving her keys with the teacher. The principal shared his concerns after meeting with the teacher. "The hard thing for me to accept," said the principal, "is that she does not accept any of the blame for what is happening".

When asked by the Director about the teacher's assignment, the principal acknowledged that the teacher was moved from teaching geometry, because of some complaints from parents, and assigned consumer math and math 9 classes. The assistant principal said, "We had to move her from geometry to what she's teaching this year because we couldn't get enough documentation on her last year". A sharp look

from the principal halted any further comments from the assistant.

At that point, the Director asked to see the evaluation records for the teacher. Although the teacher was under evaluation, there was only one observation form which contained ratings of average and above average ratings. That observation was written up by one of the assistant principals. The principal indicated that they (administration) often walked by her room to monitor her classes. "For example," the principal said, "I was by there the other day...it was a zoo!" He described that incident:

When I was walking by her room, I had to stop because the noise was no bad. I stood at the door and I don't how to describe it except to say it was a "zoo"! Students were talking three rows over...Mrs. \_\_\_ was working with 2 or 3 students. The door was not totally open so my presence was not known to the students right away. Soon though, they were saying "It's Mr. \_\_\_, and things quietened down. Mrs. \_\_\_ looked at me, and I just shook my head and motioned that I didn't want to talk to her. I was disgusted! I really was!

He had not discussed the incident with the teacher.

The Director had earlier discussed the teacher with the supervisor in order to determine the extent of the problem. The supervisor informed the Director that "Mrs. \_\_\_ was not as bad as the administration at the school indicated". She went on to say, "Why should she (teacher) be penalized for student behavior? I feel that it is the administration's fault". The supervisor pointed out that the department chairman in the school was also "supportive of Mrs. \_\_\_, and had, therefore, never been used by the administration for advice or assistance".

With that prior knowledge in mind, the Director asked the principal if he had involved the supervisor and the department head in working with the teacher. The principal responded, "Yes, but I don't think Mrs \_\_\_\_ (supervisor) sees the problem as we do." He further explained, "When the supervisor or any of us are in the class, things run smoothly. The students aren't going to act up when we are there".

"What about her instructional skills?" asked the Director. "Are some of these problems occurring because she (teacher) is not a good teacher?"

The principal indicated that no one was really concerned about her instructional abilities. "She works hard, and the supervisor says she does ok in the classroom", he continued.

The principal's attitudes toward the teachers are reflected in his next comments:

If she would just admit that there is a problem and indicate that she will try to work on it, but she says she's not doing anything any differently than she has in the past! She wants to blame everything on five students. Two of those students dropped out of her class, and she just replaced them with other students...

Perhaps because of this attitude, the principal had not accepted opinions of the supervisor and the department head. Rather than seeking causes of the problem, he continued to deal only with symptoms. Consequently, the information which he attempted to process was selected and limited. He continued, throughout the year, to rely primarily upon student opinions for the source of his information.

Emotions often run strong when conflicts occur because of unsatisfactory performance. Strong feelings toward a vocational teacher leads one high school principal to judge every action on the part of the teacher as deliberate, and causes him to direct all information gathering to one goal--getting the teacher out of his building.

No love was lost between the principal and his mechanical drawing teacher (#26). As the principal readily admitted to the Director of Personnel, "I hate the son-of-a-bitch...He knows it, and I don't care who else knows it!" It was that intensity of feelings that prohibited the principal from observing and having a productive working relationship with the teacher. It is known that those feelings did not begin with the school year; they were resultant feelings from previous encounters with the teacher, heightened when the teacher was assigned to the principal's vocational school at the beginning of the 1979-1980 school year.

Two years ago, the teacher was removed from the vocational school because of numerous parental complaints about the teacher's "incompetency" in teaching. Unable to take action to dismiss the teacher from the school system because of a lack of documentation, the superintendent assigned the teacher to a tutor monitor position in a middle school at his regular teacher salary, with all hopes that the teacher would resign. That did not occur. After one year, the teacher sought legal counsel and demanded to be assigned to a teaching position. He was reassigned to the vocational school.

It was late January when the principal first contacted the Director of Personnel to discuss some of the concerns he had about the teacher. Simultaneously, the superintendent received letters of concern from several parents whose children were in the teacher's classes.

When the Director met with the principal at his school, the principal indicated that letters were being sent by parents to the superintendent with his full encouragement. "He's a lousy teacher", he commented. He immediately pulled a folder from a drawer in his desk and placed it on top of the desk. "I'm so mad at him this time!" he said. "These are the exam papers, and there's no excuse for what he's done!" As he explained, several students complained about their exam grades, indicating that the teacher was not being fair in grading the tests, and that he (teacher) would not discuss those grades with them. The principal reviewed the tests, determined that there were some disparities, but credited those disparities to racial bias on the part of the teacher and the teacher's way of "getting back" at students who complained to the principal. "We're talking vindictiveness here," the principal said, referring to some of the papers.

After reviewing his concerns regarding the tests, he said to the Director, "Let me show you one thing". He pulled open the middle desk drawer, took out a clear plastic container of straight pins, and dropped them on some papers on the desk. He said:

I keep this...(Pause)...This guy was in my institution one

time before, and at the end of the year he got out, and his final shot to me was to walk in that door over there (pointing to the office door)...He told me that I had done him a disservice and had put a knife in his back and that he was the best teacher I ever had. He dropped these on my desk (demonstrating by dropping the container) and said, "You will never know when I stick one of these into you", and walked out. (Field notes: 1/1980)

The principal put the container back into the drawer and slammed the drawer shut. He continued:

I was delighted that he was gone, but I didn't expect to get him back! I have a very difficult time being civil to the man. I'm very careful not to say anything about it. I speak to him when he walks in in the morning and when he walks out in the afternoon.

Those feelings came through when another incident occurred.

The Director of Personnel was walking into the principal's office when the assistant principal commented, "He's (principal) furious this morning!" When the Director entered the office, the principal was sitting behind his desk with his arms folded on top of the desk. "I'm so damn mad at that son-of-a-bitch that I don't know what to do!" He proceeded to explain that the teacher was in the office that morning running off material that he had been told by the assistant principal the previous day not to run off. The principal, demonstrating with his hands, said the stack of papers was about eight inches high. "When I approached him about it," the principal said, "He said it was different material from yesterday". "He's a liar, it's the same identical material he had yesterday!"

When the Director asked the principal if he could tell whether the papers were different or the same, the principal replied, "I



know they were!"

During the first visit with the principal, the Director reviewed the teacher's evaluation record. There was only one observation form completed by an assistant principal, and that form was unsigned by the teacher. The principal indicated that the observation, which contained average and above average ratings, had not been shared with the teacher. When asked if that observation was the only observation, the principal replied, "Yes, of that kind of observation". He went on to say, "I observe the class frequently. I have not put anything in writing because there just ain't that much going on in there".

In this case, the principal's own personal biases and emotions toward the teacher led to inadequate analysis of the problem. Feelings were so high, behaviors so overt, that the principal never systematically analyzed the behaviors and feelings that existed, particularly his own. If the teacher had not resigned later in the school year, the school system would once again have found that efforts to remove the teacher from the system would have been futile.

Time constraints and the desire to maintain the status quo of his newly opened high school led a principal to discontinue information gathering on a teacher who had been administratively assigned to his school because of inadequate performance. Having a teacher, who had been identified as unsatisfactory, assigned to his new school was not the desire of the principal, especially since his school opened for the first time in August 1979. He did, however, approve her

transfer to his English department because the other members of that department were considered to be extremely effective. Although the principal received a number of requests from students to be transferred from the teacher's classes, those requests tapered off by mid October, partially because the principal refused to move any of the students. Student complaints had not been verified because classroom observations did not reveal evidence of any of the student concerns, such as noise, yelling by the teacher, and lack of response by the teacher to student questions. Feeling frustrated over the situation, the principal told the Director of Personnel:

It's right now, that...I feel that...that we're not moving on this lady. It's clear to me that from the observation forms that are being filled out (picking observation forms up in his hands), and from the casual observations that we do...(Pause) ...that we're not getting anywhere...at all, and unless, we have a new strategy for getting rid of this lady, I'm not going to waste my time on it. I'll...I'll continually try to help her, but in terms of spending a lot of time...I don't see us doing that.

The principal later told the Director of Personnel that he did not want to run the risk of having an explosive personnel problem during his first year as principal and as he opened a new school with new teachers. He did not want those teachers' first experience with him to be one of his "getting rid of a teacher".

Similar behaviors were observed by Crowson and Porder-Gehrie (1980). Time constraints and perceived threats to the status quo of a school resulted in analysis being stalled.

Analysis depends, in large measure, upon the principal's ability to understand his or her own biases and feelings toward

certain behaviors in other individuals. Being able to stand back and look inwardly in relation to those biases and feelings is very significant if principals hope to gather the necessary information needed to put a problem into perspective, and, ultimately, to define the problem. Faulty and/or inadequate analysis presents a stumbling block for the next phase of the decision making process, the definition of the problem.

### Step 3 - Definition of Problem

When the decision maker defines the problem, the quality and specificity of the definition determines the options and the quality of the solution. Elbing (1978:109-120) suggests that explicit statement of the problem includes specifying a standard or standards which have been violated, dealing with conflicting standards, and specifying ownership of the problem. He indicates that when the problem is stated behaviorally it will lead to a solution containing a statement of the necessary behavioral changes. A well defined problem, then, is in evidence when "...the manager understands what is wrong with enough comprehension to be able to tell others about the situation in terms they can understand and (his emphasis) to be able to generate possible solutions that will eliminate the problem (Lyles, 1982 :72).

As indicated earlier, Ridgemont principals had a number of specified standards and several implied standards on which to hang their problem identification hats. It was easier for principals to define problems arising out of violations of specific standards, whether

legislated by the state or prescribed organizational goals. Determining standards violated when unsatisfactory performance took the form of unacceptable attitudes and relationships was not as clear cut for principals in Ridgemont. Their attempts to describe and define the standards violated were often characterized by vagueness and uncertainty.

According to Elbing (1978:113-114) two types of conflict can exist for a decision maker as a result of conflicting standards. First of all, the decision maker may be faced with standards that conflict with one another. The ability of the decision maker to verbalize internal value conflicts is essential to his or her effectiveness as a manager in resolving problems and avoiding future ones. Secondly, the decision maker may find that his or her standards are in conflict with the standards of others in the organization. Being able to deal with the pressures of either "giving in" to the standards of others, or "taking a stand" depends upon the risk perceived by the decision maker to his job security and status.

The following cases have been selected because they illustrate the ease with which certain standards were able to be defined. Other cases are presented because they depict some of the behaviors evidenced by some Ridgemont principals during this phase of decision making.

A high school principal was not uncomfortable with the issue of unmarried faculty members, male and female, living together until the fact became known as a violation of the community standards and

school board standards. When parents came to the principal in early May with a complaint about two of his teachers who were living together in the school community, he called the Director of Personnel to inform her that he had a case of "immorality". According to the principal, the parents were upset because two of his teachers, an art teacher (#13) and an industrial arts teacher (#14), were living together in an apartment complex in the community. He told the Director that he had known about the situation for some time. When she (#13) moved in with him (#14) in his apartment, I advised both of them against it...Now, It's official and I have to handle it," he said.

The principal had already met with the teachers before contacting the Director to inform them of the complaints registered by the parents. He informed the Director that during his meeting with the teachers, he told the art teacher that "the community was after her". When the Director asked the principal why he made that statement to the art teacher instead of addressing the matter to both of them, the principal replied, "They were both told, however, the community is after her"(his emphasis).

Although the school board attorney had some question about whether the school system could dismiss the teachers on the basis of "immorality", the decision never had to be made because the two teachers resigned quietly from the school system. Forewarning the teachers about the risks of living together in the community, enabled

the principal to acknowledge that he had handled the situation and allowed him in good conscience to take action in response to the standards of the community and the school system.

Aware of rumors that her male science teacher (#19), recently divorced, was living with a seventeen year old student, a high school principal responded immediately to the situation by alerting central office administrators and beginning an investigation on her own to confirm or dispel the rumors. Not convinced by the teacher's explanation that he and the girl were married, the principal informed the teacher that she was notifying the central office of the situation. A meeting was scheduled with the Director of Personnel, the Assistant Superintendent of Supportive Services, the principal, and the teacher, who was instructed to bring proof of his marriage with him. When the teacher arrived for the meeting, he did not have a marriage license, or proof in any other form, of his marriage. The teacher did admit that he and the student had been living together for two weeks prior to their alleged marriage.

The teacher was informed by the assistant superintendent that the matter would be referred to the school board attorney because of the age of the student. The teacher was further directed to bring proof of his marriage to the Director of Personnel on the following day.

On the following day, the teacher submitted a hand written letter of resignation, effective immediately. In the meantime.

a letter was prepared informing the teacher of the intent of the superintendent to recommend that he be dismissed from the school system because he had been living, out of wedlock, with a minor for a period of ten days. The letter was never delivered.

This particular case involved a "morality" issue of a different nature than the previously mentioned case where two teachers were living together. In this instance, the standard violated extended beyond the school system to include a legal standard involving a minor.

When faced with multiple unsatisfactory behaviors, principals often defined the problem in terms of the most obviously violated standard. A high school principal decided she could no longer tolerate the "Jekyll-Hyle" personality of her industrial arts teacher (#19), and recommended dismissal when he failed to follow her directives that his classes were not to be left unattended. Although the industrial arts program had improved since the principal hired the teacher, problems over the past two years involving excessive absenteeism, interpersonal problems with teachers and students, and an increasing defiance of administrative authority overshadowed the progress of the program.

Realizing that the classroom observations would, for the most part, be satisfactory and that the teacher's brashness toward others would not stand the test of "incompetency", the principal began to focus on the safety factor involved when students were left unattended

in his industrial arts classes. After warning the teacher, verbally and in writing, against leaving his classes, especially while students were using power equipment, the principal consulted with the Director of Personnel and then notified the teacher of her intent to recommend dismissal. The teacher submitted his resignation on the following day in a manner that was perhaps indicative of his behavior in his school. He walked into the personnel department on the following day and asked if there was a typewriter he could use. He then sat down without comment, typed out his resignation letter, folded it, handed it to one of the secretaries, and said, "So long! It's been good to know you!" His resignation was effective immediately.

The teacher's failure to follow the principal's directives allowed the principal to take action within a brief period of time. In contrast, she had been working with the teacher for over a year and a half on other problems. Not only was the action a legitimate one as far as the school system was concerned, resolving the problem in a much shorter period of time proved beneficial for the principal and her school.

An elementary principal made a similar decision to define a problem in terms of the most obviously violated standard when her art teacher (#35) failed to provide lesson plans on a weekly basis, as directed. Numerous problems began to occur early in the school year with the art teacher in the form of inadequate student discipline, low observation ratings by the art supervisor, and complaints by teachers who felt their



students were not "doing anything" in art classes. Comparing the teacher to her former art teacher who resigned at the end of the previous school year, the principal described the school as now being "blah" because walls that were once filled with quality art work were now empty.

It was apparent to the principal that the teacher, whose background and experience was in secondary art, was unable to "bring art down to an elementary level". Seeking the assistance of the art supervisor was only partially effective because as the principal later admitted, "There's bad blood between those two...I don't know why... She (art supervisor) wanted me to hire her". Feeling pressured by the supervisor to "get rid of" the teacher and constrained by several other personnel problems in her school, the principal ultimately decided to take a more immediate action when the teacher failed to submit lesson plans on a weekly basis. After repeated conferences and written directives, the principal notified the teacher of her intent to recommend dismissal.

As the two cited cases indicate, the two principals, under different circumstances, defined their personnel problems in terms of the most obviously violated standard, which allowed a more expedient resolution of the problems with little or no rebuttal from the teachers in question.

External influences modified some principals' behaviors in situations in which they might not have taken Level II Actions had they

not felt pressured by others. Finding himself running out of teaching assignments and pressured by others to take action, a middle school principal finally had to address the matter of incompetency of a 62 year old handicapped teacher (#8). The principal had postponed the problem for several years by reassigning the teacher annually to different subject areas, and by trying to get the teacher to retire. Both measures proved unsuccessful. It was not until the principal felt pressured by the central office staff, who implied that he was not handling the problem effectively, that he yielded to the central office's definition that the teacher was incompetent. He then prepared to determine the possible alternatives.

In another situation, the same principal yielded to a supervisor's definition of the problem when one of his math teachers (#5) failed to take recommended courses to upgrade his skills in math. Although the principal was very supportive of the teacher who was effective in relating to middle school students, and who, in the principal's opinion, had "made something out of himself" having grown up in the ghettos of Chicago, he finally yielded to the concerns of the supervisor who determined that the teacher did not have the knowledge base to teach math. Rather than defining the problem as incompetency and tackling it as such, the principal focused on the fact that the teacher failed to take two courses that were provided for him during the summer months, without sufficient justification.

In both situations cited, the level of performance of the teachers

was below the standard of performance expected by the school system. Without the outside pressures from others, however, it is not likely that the principal would have responded with Level II Actions.

In another situation, a middle school principal was sidetracked in his efforts to resolve a departmental conflict when pressured by a supervisor who felt the problem should be defined as "immorality". When his physical education department head complained of problems within her department, the principal attempted to resolve the situation. It was discovered that part of the conflict was the result of the department head's concern that two teachers (#2)(#3) in her department were having an affair. Because the two teachers were constantly seen together during the school day and at various athletic activities, rumors were developing within the student body and the faculty. Such rumors, in the department head's opinion, cast an undesirable reflection on her department, but her attempts to address the issue with the two teachers led to strained relations between the department head and one of the teachers (#2).

In an attempt to resolve the issue, the principal met with both teachers, informed them of his intent to have harmony restored, and of his concern for their perceived behavior. The two teachers assured the principal that nothing other than friendship was involved. In the meantime, the department head shared her concerns with the supervisor of physical education, who immediately contacted the Director of Instruction to find out what was going to be done about the situ-

ation. Then the Director told the supervisor that she felt the principal was handling the matter in a satisfactory manner. Two days later, the supervisor contacted the Director again and informed her that something had to be done about the "goings on". The supervisor shared with the Director his knowledge of a similar situation with one of the teachers (#2) in which the teacher was responsible for breaking up a marriage. He also shared with the Director that others were concerned about the teacher's (#2) behavior, and that a petition was on its way to the superintendent protesting the situation in the school. At that point, he expressed his opinion that the principal was "white-washing" the matter, and that he was going to the superintendent to inform him of the problem because he "was going to cover his hindparts".

With that information the Director of Personnel called the principal and discussed the situation once again with him. Aware of the supervisor's feelings because they talked earlier that day, the principal was apprehensive about whether or not he should or could pursue the issue of "morality". After a careful review of the situation and assurances from the Director that he was handling the problem in the proper way, the principal continued to pursue the problem as one of interpersonal conflict between department members, and not one of "morality".

While not yielding to pressures from the supervisor, the principal was able to resolve the problem. No petition ever surfaced; the departmental conflicts eventually were resolved to the extent that the department head and the teachers were able to work together with-

out apparent conflict.

This section reviewed the criteria for effective definition of personnel problems and presented cases representative of the various types of constraints affecting problem definition. The ability of principals to accurately define problems determines the success of alternative actions applied to their problems.

#### Step 4 - Selecting Alternative Actions

According to Elbing (1978:132), the test of a manager's decision making ability is his skill in creating an operational solution to a problem. After recognizing that a problem exists, and carefully analyzing the cause or causes so that the real problem is defined, then the next important step in the identification-resolution process is the selection of an action that best enables the system to meet its goals, and, at the same time, is acceptable to those who must implement it.

Having defined their problems, Ridgemont principals had two levels of actions, Level I and Level II, which they could utilize in attempting to resolve their personnel problems. Level I Actions allowed more creativity in remedying problems at the school level with little interaction with the central office. Level II Actions, on the other hand, were more restrictive. Once a Level II Action was recommended as an alternative action, the decision making was taken out of the hands of the principals and handled at the central office level.

In the period of time between the definition of the problem and the selection of Level II Actions, close communication was evident between the principals and the Director of Personnel, who, in turn, discussed the problems and possible alternatives with other central office administrators and the school board attorney. It was during this time that all circumstances surrounding the problems were carefully scrutinized and weighed; documentation was reviewed, and potential risks considered. In Level II Actions that could result in the termination of a teacher's contract, principals were required to define the problem in writing, as well as present evidence that would support that definition. After careful review of all information and consideration of risks, the principals were advised by the Director of Personnel whether or not they should make their recommendations. In only one instance (#21) did a principal recommend a Level II Action against the advice of the Director of Personnel.

In Ridgemont, the choice of alternatives was often hampered by faulty diagnosis and problem definition. Those principals who reacted to their problems, who fell victim to their own biases and errors in judgment, often considered alternatives with one thought in mind-- what was the easiest way to get the teachers out of their buildings. In many cases, that desire overshadowed considerations for the risks or the soundness of such alternatives. In such instances, transfer was often considered by the principals as the proper action. When (1) the teacher's performance was borderline, (2) the principal had

ignored problems and selected an immediate remedy, and/or (3) the principal failed to lay necessary groundwork and collect the required information for documentation, transfer was not the most appropriate choice of actions to resolve the problem. Some of the situations in which faulty solutions of transfer were selected by principals are described in the following cases.

Uncertain about recommending nonrenewal of a teacher's contract (#15) because he wasn't sure he had enough evidence to justify the recommendation, a high school principal finally decided against that action. He indicated to the Director of Personnel that:

...we've decided to leave Mr.      on. His problem...everything we've talked about boils down to judgment and interpersonal relationships with students and parents...(Pause)...We are going to lay it on the line with him that we are not pleased, and that we are recommending that he come back another year, but if the situation does not improve we cannot recommend continuing contract next year. We'll...just put it on that basis to him. (Field notes: 3/1980)

Almost in the very next breath, the principal suggested a transfer as another alternative, not at the high school or middle school level, but in the elementary program, suggesting possible misplacement of the teacher. Because the physical education supervisor had been actively involved in the situation, the Director of Personnel asked the principal if the supervisor supported that recommendation. He indicated that the supervisor did.

A review of the teacher's performance record and past experience record revealed that the teacher's strengths were in gymnastics and fencing, and most of his experience had been on the secondary level.

His knowledge of secondary physical education was unchallenged by the principal or the physical education supervisor, and the supervisor, contrary to the principal's earlier statement, did not feel that transfer would resolve the problem. Transfer was not pursued as a means of resolving the problem.

Frustrated by the resultant problems of her speech therapist (#36) not keeping accurate records and not providing appropriate therapy for students, the principal approached the Director of Personnel after a visit from the superintendent to her school. During the superintendent's visit, the principal discussed the problem with him and was told that an alternative might be termination of the teacher's contract. The following conversation revealed the principal's choice of transfer as a resolution to the problem:

PR: Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ (superintendent) was in this morning! When he asked me if I had any internal problems, I told him about \_\_\_\_\_. She is a good therapist, but she doesn't want to do paper work. When I talked with the superintendent this morning he said, 'We may have to dump her'.

DP: It isn't that simple.

PR: I know...(Pause)...I don't see her in elementary. I see her working with older students...where she can use her dramatics. She's really not geared to elementary...I really strongly feel...have a gut feeling that she shouldn't be in elementary.

DP: She has always been in elementary.

PR: I know...

DP: She has been in elementary for over fifteen years, to be exact.

PR: I know. I think reassignment is my recommendation. I



think her problem will continue. I don't know whether it's a matter that she doesn't understand, or what. If we are audited by the state, we would get "0"!

DP: When you say reassignment...Where?...and what assignment are you referring to?

PR: Speech and drama teacher. She doesn't relate to younger children or EMR (educable mentally retarded) children. If she can't see immediate results, it bothers her. If she had older students then she could hand out parts and do scenery...that would be her niche.

DP: I really don't understand why you feel drama would resolve her performance problem.

PR: I think this is really her thing (drama). Besides, if there isn't a niche, I guess we just have to put it to her. I'm not overjoyed at having to go through this another two months.

DP: \_\_\_\_\_ (principal), If you'll put all of your concerns in writing and send me your documentation, I'll review the matter.

PR: Of course, you know, she'll be the first to go to REA (Ridgmont Education Association).

DP: I realize that possibility because she has been an officer and very active. That's why your documentation must be in order.

Whether the principal was influenced by the superintendent's stance on the teacher's performance was not known to the Director. It was evident to the Director that there were confusing and contradictory statements from the principal regarding the problem and the rationale for transfer. Because the teacher transferred to the school at the beginning of the school year, the Director suggested that placing the teacher under evaluation was a more appropriate alternative at that time.

Five days prior to the deadline for nonrenewal recommendations

to be submitted to the Director of Personnel, an elementary principal indicated to the Director that the principal and the supervisor were not pleased with a fourth grade teacher's performance (#48). Inadequate planning was given as the primary concern. The supervisor had just completed an observation before the principal called the Director:

PR: Mrs. \_\_\_ (supervisor) was in to see Mr. \_\_\_ (teacher), and things were not good at all. Mrs. \_\_\_ said he might do ok in 6th grade. Could we try him there?

DP: I really don't know. My concern is that he will go on continuing contract at the end of the year.

PR: Oh, that's right!

DP: Why does Mrs. \_\_\_ think he (teacher) will do better in the 6th grade?

PR: She just said she thought he would...(Pause)...that's where he wants to teach. He's tried to transfer.

DP: You did say that planning was the problem, didn't you?

PR: Yes, that's the main thing.

DP: I really think the main consideration at this time should be whether or not he should go on continuing contract. There's only about a week and a half before recommendations have to be turned in...(Pause)...how about having Mrs. \_\_\_ visit his classroom some more and then, get back in touch with me at the end of next week. Ok?

PR: Sure. I'll also try to get into his room a few more times.

The Director of Personnel contacted the principal over a week later because she had not heard from the principal since the initial telephone conversation regarding the fourth grade teacher. The Director telephoned the principal and inquired about the teacher. The principal's perception of the teacher's performance had changed considerably:

PR: Well, \_\_\_\_\_ (director), everything has improved. He still doesn't do the planning on paper that I like; however, he does things in the classroom that I wish other teachers would do, so I'm not going to take any action...I understand he wants to transfer to middle school. I would support his going, but I would welcome him back here.

In this instance, the principal faced a time constraint in the form of a deadline for Level II Actions. She had, however, not laid the necessary groundwork to initiate such a recommendation, and chose not to pursue the matter. The principal had been ill during the school year, causing her to be away from the school for periods of several weeks at a time. In a later conversation with the Director of Personnel, the principal confided that she had not been "on top" of things because she had been ill, and that under different circumstances she would possibly have recommended nonrenewal because the teacher was "mediocre" and would probably never have "set the world on fire". She also expressed that she didn't feel she "could handle a grievance".

In another situation, a high school principal was disturbed to the point of anger when told by the Director of Personnel that his documentation on a math teacher (#29) was not sufficient to consider dismissal. When the Director informed the principal that she had reviewed the documentation, and had also shared the documentation with the school board attorney, and that both she and the attorney felt the case was too weak to pursue. The principal had earlier expressed his desire to "fire" the teacher. In anger, the principal retorted, "What about the kids!" He went on to say, "That teacher has done more harm...she

shouldn't be allowed to teach in this system!"

The Director explained to the principal that she agreed, that she personally believed the teacher was a weak teacher, even though the supervisor felt otherwise, but there were several factors that had to be considered. She then explained to him that the documentation consisted mainly of student complaints, which indicated a problem, but provided no evidence of the nature of the problem, or of what was happening in the classroom. There was only one written classroom observation during the year. Secondly, the teacher was a black, fifty-two year old female with twenty-five years of experience in the school system. Her personnel file contained only satisfactory ratings for all of those years. "The risks are too high," she explained, "We would only lose this one...and ruin any future chance to get rid of her." On this occasion, the principal left the office, unconvinced. He called two days later, apologized for his abruptness, and indicated that during the summer months he would like for the Director to work with him on "proper documentation".

In a later conversation with the principal, he told the Director that he appreciated her advice and her understanding. "I was told by my former superintendent, that I reacted to things too quickly," he confided. "You've spent a lot of time with me...letting me bounce things off you, and...(Pause)...I appreciate that." This was not the only instance of teacher problems that the principal and Director had discussed during the year.

In Ridgmont, the choice of alternatives was also hampered by influences from others within the system, leading some principals to choose to take no action. In one such situation, an elementary principal received no support from the special education supervisor when he told her of his intent to recommend nonrenewal of a special education teacher's contract (#33), and, as a result, he did not pursue the recommendation. The special education teacher was hired in late September 1979 to fill a learning disabilities position that opened up because of growth. Because he was the only available applicant, the teacher was employed even though he did not have adequate skills in diagnostic testing. The teacher was then assigned to work with another special education teacher in the principal's school, but was not given any responsibilities for testing. This fact was the primary reason why the supervisor felt she could not support the principal's desire to recommend nonrenewal.

Expecting but not receiving a recommendation from the principal, the Director of Personnel called the principal, and was surprised when the principal told her he was not going to recommend nonrenewal. "I told her (supervisor) that I would only have the need for one teacher in my building next year," the principal said. Assuring the principal that that might not be the case, and that he could have the teacher next year did not bring about a reversal of the principal's decision.

The Director made an appointment to visit with the principal on the following day to discuss the matter. During that conversation,

the principal discussed other concerns about the teacher, such as being late, not staying in his classroom during the day, and not getting along with some of the teachers in the building. After a rather lengthy conversation, the Director informed the principal that she felt he should make the recommendation because of the teachers' performance, but also because the teacher was eligible for continuing contract at the end of the year.

In this instance, the principal agreed to recommend nonrenewal only after assurances from the Director that he should make that decision. The Director never fully understood why the principal reacted as he did to the supervisor's stance; there were no clues available to the Director during his conversation with the principal.

One alternative exercised by some principals in Ridgemont was the option of doing nothing. Elbing (1978:142) contends that a clear distinction exists between doing nothing and failing to define or face a problem. Two of the high school principals never really addressed specific problems within their schools because they felt there wasn't a solution; in essence, they felt they had to live with their teacher problems. In other instances, principals, who had failed to adequately define their problems, postponed their decision until they were able to backtrack and gather sufficient data to support their resolutions.

### Step 5 - Implementation of Actions

The decision making process is considered complete upon the implementation of the selected solution to the problems. Elbing (1978:155) states that "...a decision is worthless unless it can be implemented in the organizational situation." The quality of the decision, therefore, affects the successful implementation of that decision.

Toward the final resolution of teacher problems, Ridgmont principals had made decisions and recommendations on all of the 53 problem teachers by the end of the study in August 1980. Twenty-five of the teacher problems were referred to a higher authority for resolution as principals recommended Level II Actions to resolve the problems. Level II Actions as resolutions will be presented in the following section of this chapter. Decisions that were made regarding the remaining twenty-three teachers will not be elaborated upon, except to show that many of the problems were not resolved within the span of that year. Principals did have numerous conferences, spent many hours listening and observing, provided support and guidance, and resorted to a variety of Level I Actions. Those actions included reassignment within the schools, placing teachers under evaluation, and writing directives. Several teachers did resign at the end of the year as a result of the "counseling" done by their principals. In the three years following the research for this study, only ten of the fifty-three teachers who became a part of the study

remained in the school system; only nine of the teachers maintained a satisfactory level of performance. Five teachers were forced to resign, while others retired, or voluntarily left the system to seek other employment.

As previously stated, nearly half (25) of the reported problems were resolved at a level higher than the school: the result of principals recommending Level II Actions. As previously described in Chapter V, principals in Ridgemont could take Level I or Level II Actions to resolve their personnel problems. Level II Actions were recommended for disciplinary actions in the form of transfer, or termination of a teacher's contract. Twenty-five such actions were recommended by the principals. Three of the Level II Actions were for transfers to other schools; the remaining twenty-two recommendations were for termination of contracts.

All but two of the Level II recommendations were upheld by the central office administration. As a result of the other recommendations, twenty of the teachers' contracts were terminated by the end of the 1979-1980 school year. Of those terminations, one contract was nonrenewed (#9) by the school board; eighteen teachers resigned, and one teacher (#8) retired at the end of the school year. After much controversy, the Ridgemont School Board took the final action to transfer three teachers from one elementary school to three different schools as soon as the Circuit Court Judge ruled in favor of the school system's right to take such action.



The following section describes the Level II Actions proposed and the final resolution of the problems. While much detail is intentionally omitted, two factors should emerge from the synopsis of each problem: (1) the unsatisfactory behaviors or events that were defined by the principals in Ridgemont; (2) the behavior of the teachers and the actions taken by some of the teachers as a result of their principals' recommendations.

### Resolution of Level II Actions

#### Recommendations for Transfer

Because they (#38) (#39) (#40) failed to follow the prescribed reading program and failed to follow directives issued by the school administration, three kindergarten teachers were transferred to three different elementary schools for the next year. Two of the teachers (#38) (#39), who were both within three years of retirement, filed grievances, requesting that the transfers be rescinded. The two teachers charged that they had been disciplined in an "arbitrary, punitive, and capricious manner without just cause". Both teachers sought legal counsel other than the UniServ Director. The third teacher, who had been a teacher for only four years, withdrew from the other two teachers and tried to get the principal to withdraw her recommendation for her transfer. When that was unsuccessful, the teacher met with the appropriate central office administrators, including the superintendent, to ask that the recommendation be

changed.

When requested by the superintendent to determine the grievability of the transfers, the school board ruled in favor of the principal and declared that the issue was not grievable. The grievability issue was then appealed by the lawyer representing the teachers to the Circuit Court. A judge ruled in late summer that the matter of transfer in both grievances was not grievable.

While the matter was being resolved through the grievance procedure, the two teachers sought support from the teachers in their school and from the parents whose children were in their kindergarten classes. A petition was signed by the parents in support of the teachers. A delegation of parents met with the superintendent to discuss their concerns about the recommendation of the principal. Concerns about the principal's performance were also brought to the attention of the superintendent.

On several occasions the principal indicated to the Director of Personnel that "she wished she had never made the recommendation" she was feeling the pressures of parental complaints and unrest in her faculty because of the decision.

#### Recommendations for Nonrenewal

Twelve principals made recommendations for the nonrenewal of the contracts of fourteen nontenured teachers. All of the fourteen teachers elected to have a conference, as prescribed by procedure,

with the Assistant Superintendent of Supportive Services. The teachers first met with the Director of Personnel, who explained the reasons for the recommendations, shared the appropriate documentation, and reviewed the nonrenewal procedures with each of the teachers.

The Assistant Superintendent upheld twelve of the fourteen recommendations. The teachers were notified in writing by the Assistant Superintendent that a recommendation would be made to the school board to nonrenew their contracts at the end of the 1979-1980 school year. Eleven of the twelve teachers submitted resignations that were effective for the end of the year. Their actions negated a recommendation being made to the school board. One teacher (#9), however, chose not to resign and allowed the school board to approve her nonrenewal on April 9, 1980. Two weeks later, she filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, charging the school system with age discrimination.

Two of the teachers (#12) (#50) who were recommended for nonrenewal filed grievances following the recommendations being made by their respective principals. One of the grievances was filed by an elementary librarian (#50) who was serving the last of the three years required for tenure status. Her grievance, based on "misapplication of evaluation procedures", was at Step 3 of the procedure when the decision was reached by the Assistant Superintendent to renew her contract. That decision resulted in the withdrawal of her grievance before

Step 3 was completed. The decision to renew the librarian's contract was not a result of the Assistant Superintendent's decision that a personality conflict existed between the teacher and the principal, creating some of the conflicts. The librarian was assigned to another elementary school the following year.

A middle school physical education teacher (#12) filed two grievances after he was notified by his principal of her recommendation for nonrenewal. He filed one grievance, stating "misapplication of evaluation procedures" as the charge. He filed a second grievance within a very short period of time alleging that his school file contained "inaccurate, incomplete, and irrelevant information". The information in question was two documents that had been written by the principal to the teacher in which the principal described incidents that had occurred and that were unsatisfactory. One document described an incident in which the teacher physically lifted a male student and pushed him against the wall, causing marks on the student's neck and back. The second document warned the teacher about his failure to properly account for money in accordance with school procedure and time restriction. The teacher requested that the documents be removed from his file. The remedy sought by the teacher for the first grievance was renewal of his contract and a transfer to another school for the following year. Both grievances were appealed to Step 3 and heard at the same time. After meeting with the teacher and his representative, the UniServ Director, the Assis-

Superintendent for Supportive Services talked by phone with the principal. The principal agreed to remove the two documents from the school file because they had no bearing on her recommendation for nonrenewal. She was also asked to change one of the ratings of the teacher's final evaluation form, which she reluctantly did. The rating was changed from "1" to "2"; "1" represented "area needing considerable improvement"; "2" indicated an "area needing some improvement. Both were unsatisfactory ratings. In return, the teacher submitted his resignation for the end of the year.

The previously mentioned nonrenewal recommendations were made by the principals in March and April 1980, and were based on the unsatisfactory performance level of the teachers. Their specific problems were reflected in Figure 4, located in Chapter VI.

Another recommendation for nonrenewal was made earlier in the school year and was not reflected in the fourteen recommendations just described. Early in the school year, an elementary teacher (#53) was accused of providing the students in his classes with the exact content material from a standardized test, which had recently been administered. The teacher was notified by his principal in early December that his contract would not be renewed at the end of the school year. After seeking unsuccessfully to have the decision reversed, the teacher resigned in December 1979. Although the teacher was notified by the principal of the principal's intent to recommend nonrenewal, the recommendation was never submitted. The teacher was

allowed to resign without the incident being recorded in his personnel file.

#### Recommendations for Dismissal

Three recommendations for dismissal were initiated by three principals. In all three incidents, the dismissal would have resulted in dismissal action being taken during the contract year. Two of the teachers involved were nontenured teachers; the third teacher was tenured. Two of the recommendations resulted from teachers failing to, and in one case refusing to, follow their principals' directives.

Discouraged because her art teacher (#35) repeatedly failed to provide her with the prescribed lesson plans, an elementary principal finally requested in late March that action be taken to terminate the teacher's contract. The teacher, a bride of two weeks and a new employee in the system, talked with the principal, who agreed to withdraw the recommendation when the teacher submitted a resignation for the end of the school year.

A high school principal notified her industrial arts teacher of her intent to recommend termination of his contract because the teacher had failed, after repeated warnings, to properly supervise his classes. The teacher was late to class on numerous occasions and often left during the class period, leaving the students unsupervised. On two occasions when the principal called him into her office to discuss the problem, the teacher left her office in anger, slamming the door as he left. He was notified on the last Friday afternoon in

March. He submitted his letter of resignation, effective the following Monday.

In early November, a high school principal requested that a teacher be dismissed because the teacher used the words "f\_\_k you" during her second period math class. The teacher was immediately suspended, pending an investigation of the incident. The teacher did admit making the statement, "No one is going to say 'f\_\_k you' to me", when a student made the statement, "f\_\_k you" to the teacher when the teacher issued a detention to the student. Because there were other difficulties involved, the teacher submitted a letter of resignation that was effectively immediately.

There were two separate instances that could have resulted in dismissal action being initiated. In one instance, a high school principal learned that her biology teacher was living with a seventeen year old student in her school. There were rumors circulating in the school that the teacher and the student were married. An immediate investigation of the matter was undertaken by the principal. Several days later, the principal, the teacher, and several central office personnel meet to discuss the matter. During that meeting the teacher admitted he had been living with the girl for several weeks before they were married. When the teacher failed to provide evidence of the marriage, he was notified by the Director of Personnel that the matter would be turned over to the school board attorney. Because the student was a minor, the attorney felt dismissal was in order. On the following day, the teacher submitted a letter of

resignation, effective the same day.

As the result of parent complaints about two of his teachers (#13) (#14) living together in an apartment complex within the school community, a high school principal confronted the two teachers with the concern. It was then November. Both teachers resigned from the school system without any recommendations having to be made by the principal. The matter was settled within two days after the first parent complaint.

In another situation, a middle school teacher chose to retire at the end of the school year rather than face a potential dismissal recommendation. Mr. \_\_\_ (#8) was the epitome of a teacher who was simply "hanging on" to his teaching career. At age sixty-two, he was in poor physical condition, an object of ridicule to his students, the recipient of unexpressed pity from his peers, and a source of embarrassment to his principal. Over the past five years, Mr. \_\_\_ had been reassigned to various subject areas, to classes where he would do "the least harm". His original assignment for a number of years had been as an industrial arts teacher. His assignment at the beginning of the 1979-1980 school year was 7th grade science; a position in which he was totally ineffective. Unable to reassign Mr. \_\_\_, the principal renewed his efforts to get Mr. \_\_\_, to retire early. "The man should have retired a long time ago," the principal moaned. "He's dumb, just plain dumb...that's what he is," he declared.



In November 1979, the principal notified the Director of Personnel that he was documenting the performance of Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. By early December, the principal, unsuccessful in his attempts to "talk sense to the man", requested that Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ be removed from the classroom and assigned "anywhere other than teaching". When the principal confronted Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ with the prospect of dismissal, he responded, "I didn't think I was doing that bad a job". After talking with the Director of Personnel, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ submitted a letter within two days, indicating that he planned to retire at the end of the school year. He was transferred to a study hall position where he worked with another teacher until the end of the school year.

#### Summary

It is not known whether principals in Ridgemont reported all of their problems to the Director of Personnel, or if the twenty-five principals, who did report problems were the only principals to experience personnel problems during the 1979-1980 school year. It is clear, however, that unsatisfactory teachers could be found in all levels of schools within the system; the highest concentration being in the elementary and the high schools. The elementary principals dealt with more problems of incompetency than did either of the other levels during the period of this study.

Incompetency, reflected in inadequate teaching skills, unacceptable attitudes toward their jobs, and poor working relationships with students and others was a common source of problems for all levels of

the principalship. Incompetency problems were the most difficult problems to resolve. In actuality, problems of incompetency generally took longer to resolve; some took a year to resolve, while some were not resolved within the span of this study. Such problems caused more stress and mandated more involvement of time and effort than any of the other classifications of problems. In contrast, problems under the categories of immorality, noncompliance with school rules and regulations, and other good and just cause took only a few days to resolve. Teachers who experienced problems in the latter categories left quietly and quickly, leaving their principals with vacancies to fill--a small price to pay for a successful, trouble free resolution. In sharp contrast, teachers whose competency was questioned, challenged their principals' actions by filing grievances, rallying support from teachers and parents.

In problems of incompetency, teachers seldom experienced only one problem; usually there were attitude problems that developed. Relationships also deteriorated over a period of time. Thus, many of the problems became multi-faceted, creating situations that grew in complexity.

CHAPTER VII  
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS,  
AND IMPLICATIONS

...But now we can see that liberation and mobilization of human energies--rather than symmetry, harmony, or consistency--are the purpose of organization. Human performance is both its goal and its test.

Drucker (1977:175)

Chapter VII presents a summary and discussion of the findings, conclusions drawn from the findings, and implications for further research and educational practices.

Summary

This case study determined how principals in one suburban school system identified and resolved personnel problems resulting from unsatisfactory teacher performance. Toward this end, the following sub-topics were examined: (1) the types of teacher behaviors that principals identified as unsatisfactory, (2) the actions taken by the principals in an attempt to resolve the problems, and (3) the factors which influenced the principals' decision making.

Of the seventy-seven personnel problems involving unsatisfactory teachers during 1979-1980, fifty-three of those problems were included in this study, with the criterion for inclusion being recognition of the problem by the principals in the school system. It is not known

whether principals reported all teacher problems, or if the principals who were included in this study were the only principals who experienced personnel problems. It seems evident, however, that unsatisfactory teachers were present at all three levels of schools within the school system, with the highest concentration being found in the elementary and the high schools.

The fifty-three personnel problems identified by principals in this study were categorized on the basis of potential reasons for dismissal, as specified in the state code. These reasons included incompetency, immorality, noncompliance with school rules and regulations, and other good and just cause. No cases of disability or conviction of a felony or a crime of moral turpitude arose during the period of this study. A vast majority of the problems, forty-four in all, involved incompetency. Incompetency, reflected in inadequate teaching skills, unacceptable attitudes toward their jobs, and ineffective working relationships with students and others was a source of teacher problems at all instructional levels. Elementary principals dealt with more problems of incompetency, however, than did either the middle school or the high school principals. Since problems involving incompetency were generally multi-dimensional, a greater investment of time and energy on the part of the principals in problem solution was required.

The actions taken by principals in order to resolve teacher problems included two options: (1) Level I Actions - those actions which

were initiated by principals at their own discretion and which were carried out at the school level; and, (2) Level II Actions - the more serious recommendations resulting in removal of the teacher from the school or the school system, Level I Actions included such resolutions as formal conferences, written directives, reprimands, reassignments, and evaluation. Level II Actions involved recommendations for suspension, probation, nonrenewal, and dismissal. Twenty-five Level II recommendations were made by the principals during the course of the study.

A decision making model, which included the following five steps, was used to analyze the principals' decision making in the identification and resolution of unsatisfactory teacher problems: (1) Step 1 - Awareness of Problem, (2) Step 2 - Analysis of Problem, (3) Step 3 - Definition of Problem, (4) Step 4 - Selection of Alternative Actions, and (5) Step 5 - Implementation of Selected Actions. The findings from this study are presented below for each step in the identification resolution process:

Step 1 - Awareness of Problem - Of the fifty-three teacher problems, twenty-nine were initially identified by the principals. The remaining twenty-four problems were brought to the attention of the principals by others, specifically supervisors, parents, students, teachers, or central office administrators. Of the problems identified by principals, fourteen resulted in Level II Actions, while ten of the problems identified by others also resulted in Level II Actions being initiated by the principals. In all of the personnel problems

reported to the principals by other individuals, principals were either aware of the reported problem, or they had dealt with the teacher in question in other matters related to performance discrepancies. Principals responded immediately, in most cases, when problems were brought to their attention by others. Principals who failed to respond to the concerns of others found their own performance in question by their superiors.

Step 2 - Analysis of Problem - The quality of analysis of the problem was adversely affected when teachers exhibited attitudinal behaviors or experienced relationship problems with the principal or others in their specific schools. Analysis took less time and was virtually conflict free in issues of morality, noncompliance with organizational regulations, and good and just cause. Analysis was often short circuited when principals (1) made premature judgments, (2) failed to gather and process information adequately and accurately, (3) experienced biases and distortions, and (4) reacted to perceived threats to the status quo of their schools.

Step 3 - Definition of the Problem - Breakdowns in the first two steps of the decision process invariably led to faulty and inadequate definition of the problem. Definition was easier for principals when specific standards were violated. On the other hand, definitions of problems stemming from incompetency on the part of the teacher was often vague, dealing more with symptoms rather than causes. When the principals' job security or status were perceived as being threatened,

or when the principals' values or expectations were perceived to be in conflict with central office administrators and supervisors, principals most often yielded to organizational goals.

Step 4 - Selection of Alternative Actions - Inappropriate solutions were frequently advocated by principals when the teachers' performance was borderline, or when the principals had failed to act expeditiously and to adequately document. In such instances, the remedy most often sought by principals was to request that the teachers be removed from their respective schools. Some type of action was taken on each of the fifty-three personnel problems reported during the study. The decision to take no action was a conscious decision on the part of some of the principals. Twenty-five of the teacher problems resulted in Level II Actions being recommended by the principals.

Step 5 -Implementation of Actions - Of the twenty-five recommendations made by principals, twenty-three were upheld; two were denied at the central office level. As a result of certain Level II recommendations being made by principals, particularly for nonrenewal and transfer, teachers filed grievances, challenging the decision of the principals. Principals who were involved in those grievances had never been involved in grievances before. More grievances were filed during the 1979-1980 school year than in any other year in the history of the school system up to that time.

Factors influencing the principals' decision making were related to the perceptual framework of each principal and the actual environ-

ment in which he/she functioned. The environmental influences included all of the constraints within the school system, as well as those external to the system. The perceptual framework was described as those values, beliefs, fears, and past experiences of each individual principal which determined how each principal perceived his or her environment. Perception in the decision making process was defined as the processes by which the principal accumulated and processed information. Internal environmental influences included (1) the system-wide emphasis on improved performance of teachers; (2) the involvement of the central office administrators and supervisors in the identification and resolution of teacher problems; (3) subordinates, superordinates, peers, students, and parents with whom each principal interacted. External influences included three major factors: (1) a vocal and demanding public seeking "quality" education, (2) a combination of federal and state laws and regulations which impacted on the management prerogatives of principals, and (3) a highly mobile workforce, the result of a faltering economy and declining enrollments in schools nationwide.

It was found that the perceptual framework and the environment had such a powerful, although varying, influence on the principals' decision making that the quality of the process was often diminished, especially in cases relating to teacher incompetency. Although frequently ineffective in the decision making process, the principals in this study generally produced effective solutions.



### Discussion

A scheme of analysis, the Identification Resolution Process, based on a decision making model (Elbing, 1978; Castetter, 1981) was used to examine the dynamics of the principals' decision making during the identification and resolution of unsatisfactory teacher problems. Essentially, what emerged from this examination was the critical role the various influencing factors had on the quality of final decisions. These factors also influenced the degree of discomfort felt by principals faced with decisions concerning unsatisfactory teachers.

The principals in this study more readily completed each phase of the decision making process when dealing with performance problems which could easily be defined as immorality, noncompliance with school rules and regulations, and good and just cause. The standards violated in these categories were overt and obvious, enabling the principals to more expeditiously proceed through the decision making process, often unencumbered by feelings, or judgments. Less of the principals' time was also required, the maximum time spent in resolving such problems in the system being two days. Additionally, teachers felt vulnerable, perceiving their situations to be indefensible.

The ease with which principals were able to deal with these solutions rested on the fact that the behaviors violating the standards were socially unacceptable. There were no repercussions from others in the schools or in the community.

Previous research (Goldhammer et al., 1971; Koff et al., 1979; Manera and Wright, 1981; Gorton and McIntyre, 1978; and, Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980) showed unsatisfactory teacher performance to be a major stressor for principals, particularly when incompetency was the problem. In such cases, principals in the system dealt most comfortably when the teacher's incompetency was defined as relating to the lack of a specific skill such as planning, organization, etc. When teachers were deficient in multiple skills, or when unsatisfactory performance was accompanied by relationship conflicts, and/or perceived attitude problems, however, the decision making process often became muddied. The sorting out of multiple causes hampered problem definition; many of the problems were perceived as being so complex that principals often felt inadequate, became defensive, and entered into an adversarial relationship with the teacher. Because of the length of time required for resolution, some of the unsatisfactory teachers demanded the principals' attention throughout the school year. State tenure laws placed the burden of proof to dismiss a teacher on the grounds of incompetency on the school system. The complexities of the problems and the constraints generated by the tenure regulations placed a severe time and documentation burden on the principals. Time was a precious commodity to principals in the system because like many of their counterparts across the country, their workdays were fast paced, fragmented, and marked by continuous face-to-face encounters and numerous interruptions in their daily

routine (Wolcott, 1973; Crowson and Porter-Gehrie, 1980; Blumberg Greenfield, 1980; Martin and Willower, 1981; and, Kmetz and Willower, 1982). This study's findings paralleled those of Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) regarding the feelings of powerlessness on the part of principals when constrained by tenure laws. Similar feelings of powerlessness and loss of control were experienced by most of the principals who had to deal with grievances for the first time.

In this school system, principals experienced less anxiety in taking Level I Actions than was true when they selected a Level II modus operandi. Principals could take Level I Actions without the involvement of central office staff; many of them, however, did not initiate such actions without first conferring with the Director of Personnel before and after such actions were implemented. Level II Actions, however, were more restrictive, and when recommended, could result in termination of the teacher's contract. Principals who inadequately defined their problems often chose the easy way out through attempting to transfer the teacher. Of the seven cases in which transfer was considered or recommended, only three were approved by the Director of Personnel. Twenty-three of the twenty-five Level II cases were upheld at a higher level; two recommendations for nonrenewal were denied at the central office level. Because of the usually terminal nature of Level II Actions and the state prescribed procedures for resolving them, such recommendations were accepted only when principals could provide documentation that both defined the problem ac-

curately and justified the recommendation so that the recommendation would withstand legal scrutiny. Another factor contributing to the principals' anxiety regarding Level II Actions was the fact that any weaknesses or flaws in the decision making process or documentation were highly visible to their superiors and possibly also to their subordinates.

Close communication with the Director of Personnel and support from supervisors in assessing and documenting teacher performance enabled many of the principals to effectively deal with their personnel problems. Being able to seek advice and assistance from others provided a support system for the principals, but it also ensured as much as possible, a sounder and more accurate means of making decisions regarding teacher performance. The Director of Personnel kept close contact with all personnel involved in the teacher cases. By doing so, she was able to oversee the decision process and to remain aware of the feelings and concerns of others, the extent of and quality of documentation, and possible alternatives. Thus, problems in the process were often anticipated and minimized.

### Conclusions

There is no literature on the decision making processes employed by principals in the identification and resolution of problems stemming from the unsatisfactory teacher. Surveys pinpoint that personnel problems are a source of conflict and stress for principals, but no information is available that provides insights into why such problems are

difficult for principals. Legal research provides the results of decisions and, in most cases, provides background information that reveals what principals did or did not do in resolving such matters. Field research with participant observation as the data gathering strategy was appropriate and effective for this study. The participant observer role provided the researcher access to principals and their behaviors and attitudes during the decision making process, which no outside observer alone would be permitted to study. Also accessible were the dynamics of each case reported in the study, and the interactions, behaviors, and attitudes of others within the system.

The following are general conclusions based on the summary and discussion of the findings:

1. The identification and resolution of the unsatisfactory teacher is a complex decision making process for principals.

The unpredictability of human nature, bounded by the limitations of principals in their ability to make rational decisions, as well as the internal and external influences, constrain effective decision making. Because personnel problems were rarely routine, principals were most often dealing with unpredictable outcomes. The decision making process was often short-circuited because of the personal limitations of principals, the time constraints and the nature of their duties, and the pressures exerted by influences, internal and external to the organization.

2. The external environment affected the principals' resolution of the problem of the unsatisfactory teacher.

The school system was not exempt from the effects of a growing national concern and discontent with public education and a declining economy. Demands for accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness were reflected in the system's attempt to "tighten up" the instructional program. With the emphasis on quality education, principals found greater expectations being placed on their ability to perform their personnel responsibilities. At the same time, these principals found their management prerogatives being defined by federal and state laws and mandates, as well as other factors within the system.

3. The internal environment affected the principals' identification and resolution of the problem of the unsatisfactory teacher.

The internal influences of the organization included: (1) the superintendent's stance on "getting rid" of unsatisfactory teachers, (2) the expectations for the performance of principals in all functions of the principalship, (3) the involvement of supervisors and central office personnel in observing and evaluating teacher performance, (4) increased involvement of parents, and (5) the personnel procedure requiring principals to report potential or actual personnel problems to the Director of Personnel. Principals who had

formerly ignored problems or who had failed to recognize such problems now placed themselves at risk of censure, at least, and separation, at worst. Those who ignored the problems of unsatisfactory teachers in their buildings were now forced to come to grips with those problems, often greater in number than they could effectively address.

4. Of all of the categories of problems of unsatisfactory performance, principals had the greatest difficulty dealing with teacher incompetency.

Problems involving incompetency were generally multi-dimensional, requiring more time and energy on the part of the principals in problem solution. Principals were more comfortable in dealing with teacher incompetency which related to the lack of a specific skill. When teachers were deficient in multiple skills, or when unsatisfactory performance was accompanied by relationship conflicts and/or perceived attitude problems, the decision making process often became muddied. When dealing with performance problems of immorality, noncompliance with school rules and regulations, and good and just cause, those standards which were more clearly definable, principals experienced fewer time constraints and outside influences and therefore, dealt with the problems more easily.

5. The principals' perceptual frameworks affected the entire identification resolution process.

Principals brought to each problem situation their own strengths and weaknesses in management philosophies, interpersonal relationships, job status, past experiences, and training. The combination of external and internal influences placed the principals under great pressure as they attempted to comply with the demands of the organization while at the same time complying with the constraints imposed by the unfamiliar grievance procedure and other legal mandates. Those influences, juxtaposed upon principals' personal attitudes, values, beliefs, and experiences, often appeared to distort the perceptual framework through which problems were viewed, as well as introducing a certain imprecision into the decision making process.

The more confident principals, who were essentially cognizant of their own strengths and weaknesses, were better able to confront problems objectively. In the case of less confident principals, lack of objectivity was frequently displayed with the resultant short circuiting of the information gathering and processing cycle.

6. The availability of objective and knowledgeable third parties enabled principals to more effectively pursue the decision making process.

Supervisors, other central office personnel, and the Director of Personnel assisted principals in the work of observation



evaluation, and documentation of teachers. These support people also provided a sounding board and often opened up alternative resolutions. Although research findings (Gorton and McIntyre, 1978; Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980) indicate that few principals communicate with others beyond their schools and seldom cope by talking their problems over with others, principals in this system took advantage of the opportunities to interact with others.

Koff et al. (1979) indicate the high degree of stress placed on principals by perceived threats to job security and job status. The principals in this study typified these perceptions, although the stress was somewhat lessened by the support system available to the principals. Principals felt somewhat assured because they were not "out on a limb" alone.

### Implications

#### Practice

The following implications for improving decision making as it relates to unsatisfactory teacher performance emerged from this study:

1. Decision making processes regarding the unsatisfactory teacher should be included in personnel training programs. An emphasis should be placed upon the development of skills in information processing, perception, interpersonal skills, and nonevaluative interview techniques. Training should be provided regarding the essentials of sound

legal documentation. Such training should be provided for both central office and school level administrators.

2. Management personnel should be assisted in improving those decision making skills needed to identify and resolve personnel problems. Evaluators of principals need similar skills to evaluate the quality of the principals' decision making and school management.

3. Performance standards for teachers need to be more specific and to contain a larger degree of objective and measurable criteria.

4. Procedures for handling problems of unsatisfactory performance should be re-examined as they apply to all employee groups within the school system.

### Research

The following recommendations are made for research:

1. Additional field studies should be conducted to further study the decision making processes of principals as they address the problem of the unsatisfactory teacher. Field research provides a more in-depth and fruitful examination of the issues.

2. The following additional questions should be addressed:

- a. Do different school system environments (organizational structure, size, climate, actors, etc.) affect the decision making process in different ways?
- b. Do different state codes affect the resolution of the problem of the unsatisfactory teacher differently?
- c. How do principals who function in a unionized environment

handle the problem of the unsatisfactory teacher?

- d. How do different organizational structures affect the personnel function of the principals?

### Methodological Observation

The experience of the researcher during the course of this study suggests that the effectiveness of case studies using participant observation could be greatly enhanced if such studies were conducted by a team of researchers, rather than by individuals. There are several reasons for this:

1. The amount of data generated by a study of this size is staggering.

2. Time constraints limit the breadth and the depth of the analysis conducted by an individual.

In such a team of researchers, at least one member should be an "insider", thereby accruing the following advantages:

1. Such persons can overcome organizational barriers raised by the confidential nature of personnel problems.

2. Such persons often enjoy the confidence of those within the system so necessary to the collection of data on personal thoughts and feelings of organizational actors.

3. Such persons typically possess the organizational knowledge that renders them capable of determining what questions to ask.

It is critical that individuals engaging in field research possess a sound grounding in those concepts related to administration of person-

nel function, including learning theory, personality theory, group dynamics, motivation theory, decision theory, role theory, and values theory (Castetter, 1981:12).

## WORKS CITED

- Alfonson, Robert J., Gerald R. Firth, and Richard F. Neville. Instructional Supervision: A Behavior System. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1981.
- Babbie, Earl R. The Practice Of Social Research. 2nd ed. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1979.
- Becker, H. S., B. Greer, E. Hughes, and A. Strauss. Boys In White: Student Culture In Medical School. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- Blumberg, Arthur, and William Greenfield. The Effective Principal. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1980.
- Blumer, Herbert. Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.
- Bogdan, Robert. Participant Observation In Organizational Settings. Syracuse University Division of Special Education and Rehabilitation and the Center on Human Policy, 1972.
- Burden, Larry, and Robert L. Whitt. The Community School Principal: New Horizons. Midland, Michigan: Pendall Publishing Co., 1973.
- Button, H. W. "Doctrines of Administration: A Brief History." Educational Administration Quarterly 2 (3) (Autumn 1966): 216-224.
- Byrne, David R., Susan A. Hines, and Lloyd E. McCleary. The Senior High School Principalship: Vol 1: The National Survey. Reston, Virginia: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1978.
- Campbell, Roald F., James E. Corbally, Jr., and John A. Ramseyer. Introduction To Educational Administration. 3rd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1969.
- Carlton, Patrick W., and Richard T. Johnson. The Attitudes of Virginia Educators Toward Collective Negotiations, Strikes, and Sanctions. Virginia Education Association, 1977.
- Castetter, William B. The Personnel Function In Educational Administration. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1981.

- Cohen, Michael. "Effective Schools: What The Research Says." Today's Education (April/May 1981): 58-63.
- Cornett, Lynn M. The Preparation and Selection of School Principals. Georgia: Southern Regional Education Board, 1983.
- Cribbin, James J. Leadership: Strategies For Organizational Effectiveness. AMACOM, 1981.
- Crozier, Michael. The Bureaucratic Phenomenon. Cited by Wayne K. Hoy and Cecil G. Miskel, Educational Administration: Theory, Research, and Practice, p. 77. New York: Random House, 1982.
- Crowson, Robert L., and Cynthia Porter-Gehrie. "The Discretionary Behavior of Principals in Large-City Schools." Educational Administration Quarterly 6 (1) (Winter 1980): 45-69.
- Delon, Floyd G. Legal Issues In the Dismissal of Teachers For Personal Conduct. National Organization On Legal Problems of Education, 1982.
- Denzin, Norman K. The Research Act. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978.
- Drucker, Peter F. Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.
- . The Effective Executive. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.
- . Concept Of The Corporation. New York: Harper and Row, 1964.
- . People And Performance: The Best Of Peter Drucker On Management. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
- Edwards, Newton. The Courts And The Public Schools. 3rd ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971.
- Eisner, Elliott. The Educational Imagination. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1979.
- Elbing, Alvar. Behavioral Decisions In Organizations. 2nd ed. Glenview, Illinois: Scott Foresman and Company, 1978.
- Foskett, J. M. The Normative World of the Elementary School Principal. Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration University of Oregon, 1967.

- Gold, Raymond L. "Roles In Sociological Field Observation." Social Forces. XXXVI (March 1958): 217-223.
- Goldhammer, J., et al. Elementary Principals and Their Schools: Beacons of Brilliance and Potholes of Pestilence. University of Oregon: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, 1971.
- Goldman, Samuel. The School Principal. New York: The Center for Applied Research In Education, Inc., 1966.
- Gorton, Richard A., and Kenneth E. McIntyre. The Senior High School Principalship, Vol. II: The Effective Principal. Reston, Virginia: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1978.
- Griffiths, Daniel E. Administrative Theory. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959.
- Gross, Neal, and Robert E. Herriott. Staff Leadership In Public Schools. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965.
- Hellriegel, Don, and John W. Slocum, Jr. Organizational Behavior: Contingency Views. St. Paul: West Publishing Company, 1976.
- Hencley, Stephen P., Lloyd E. McCleary, and J. H. McGrath. The Elementary School Principalship. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1970.
- Houts, Paul L. "The Changing Role of the Elementary School Principal: Report of a Conference." National Elementary Principal 55 (2) (November/December 1975).
- Hoy, Wayne K., and Cecil G. Miskel. Educational Administration: Theory, Research, and Practice. New York: Random House, 1978.
- Jacobs, Glen, ed. The Participant Observer. New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1979.
- Jacobson, P. B., W. C. Reavis, and J. D. Logsdon. The Effective School Principal. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1963.
- Janis, Irving L., and Leon Mann. Decision Making: A Psychological Analysis of Conflict, Choice, and Commitment. New York: The Free Press, 1977.

- Junker, Buford. Field Work: An Introduction To The Social Sciences. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.
- Kmetz, John T., and Donald J. Willower. "Elementary School Principals' Work Behavior." Educational Administration Quarterly 18 (4) (Fall 1982): 61-78.
- Knezevich, Stephen J. Administration of Public Education. 3rd ed. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1975.
- Koff, Robert H., James Laffey, George Olson, and Don Cichon. "Stress and the School Administrator." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in San Francisco, 8 April - 12 April, 1979.
- Kraut, Jayson, ed. American Jurisprudence 68 (2nd) 162. New York: The Lawyers Co-operative Publishing Company, 1973.
- American Jurisprudence 68 (2nd) 176. New York: The Lawyers Co-operative Publishing Company, 1973.
- American Jurisprudence 68 (2nd) 176. New York: The Lawyers Co-operative Publishing Company, 1973.
- Lane, Willard R., Ronald G. Corwin, and William G. Monahan. Foundations of Educational Administration: A Behavioral Analysis. London: The Macmillan Company, Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1971.
- Leithwood, K. A., and D. J. Montgomery. "The Role of the Elementary School Principal In Program Improvement." Review of Educational Research 52 (3) (Fall 1982): 309-339.
- Levinson, Harry. "Criteria For Choosing Chief Executives." Harvard Business Review (July, August 1980): 113-120.
- Lipham, James M., and James A. Hoeh, Jr. The Principals: Foundations and Functions. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1974.
- Lofland, John. Analyzing Social Settings. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1971.
- Lutz, F. W., and L. Iannaccone. Understanding Educational Organizations: A Field Study Approach. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1969.
- Lyles, . Practical Management Problem Solving and Decision Making. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1982.



- Manera, Elizabeth, Robert E. Wright. "Real Job Pressures - Knowing The Difference between Stress and Challenge." National Association Secondary School Principals Bulletin 65 (449) (December 1981)
- Martin, William J., and Donald J. Willower. "The Managerial Behavior of High School Principals." Educational Administration Quarterly 17 (1) (Winter 1981): 69-90.
- McCleary, Lloyd E., and Scott D. Thompson. The Senior High School Principal Vol. III: The Summary Report. Reston, Virginia: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1978.
- Miller, William C. "Staff Morale, School Climate, and Educational Productivity." Educational Leadership 38 (6) (March 1981): 483-486.
- Miner, John, and J. Frank Brewer. "The Management of Effective Performance." In Marvin Dunette, ed. Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Chicago: Rand McNalley, 1976.
- Mitchell, Terence R., and Stephen G. Green. "Leadership and Poor Performance: An Attributional Analysis." In Richard Steers, and Lyman W. Porter. Motivation and Work Behavior. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1983.
- Neill, Shirley B., and Jerry Custis. Staff Dismissal: Problems and Solutions: AASA Critical Report. California: Education News Service, 1979.
- O'Reilly, Charles A., III. "The Use of Information In Organizational Decision Making: A Model and Some Propositions." Research In Organizational Behavior (5). JAI Press, Inc., 1983.
- , and Barton A. Weitz. "Managing Marginal Employees: The Use of Warnings and Dismissals." In Richard M. Steers, and Lyman W. Porter. Motivation and Work Behavior. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1983.
- Owens, Robert G. Organizational Behavior In Education. 2nd ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1981.
- Persell, Caroline, and Peter Cookson. "The Effective Principal In Action." The Effective Principal: A Research Summary. Reston, Virginia: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1982.

- Pharis, William L., and Sally Banks Zakariya. The Elementary School Principals in 1978: A research Study. Arlington, Virginia: National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1979.
- Pharis, William L. "The Principals: Where Are We?" The National Elementary Principal 55 (2) (November/December 1975): 4-8.
- Pierce, Paul R. The Origin and Development of the Public School Principals. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1935.
- Roberts, Joan I., and Sherrie K. Akinsanya. Educational Patterns and Cultural Configurations: The Anthropology of Education. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1976.
- Sarason, S. The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971.
- Schatzman, Leonard, and Anselm L. Strauss. Field Research: Strategies For A Natural Sociology. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973.
- Shoemaker, Joan, and Hugh W. Fraser. "What Principals Can Do: Some Implications From Studies of Effective Schooling." Phi Delta Kappa 63 (3) (November 1981): 178-182.
- Schuster, Albert H., and Don H. Stewart. The Principal and the Autonomous Elementary School. Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Co., 1973.
- Simon, Herbert A. Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Processes In Administrative Organizations. 3rd ed. New York: The Free Press, 1976.
- The New Science of Management Decision. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977.
- Smith, Louis. "An Evolving Logic of Participant Observation, Educational Ethnography, and Other Case Studies." In Review of Research In Education. Lee S. Shulman ed. Illinois: F. E. Peacock Publishers Inc., 1979.
- Virginia School Laws. Code of Virginia 1950, Michie Co., 1978.
- Webber, Ross A. Management. Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1975.
- Wolcott, Harry F. The Man In The Principal's Office: An Ethnography. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973.
- "An Ethnographic Approach to the Study of School Administrators." Human Organization 29 (2) (Summer 1970): 115-122.

- Yukl, Gary. "Managerial Leadership and the Effective Principal."  
In The Effective Principal: A Research Summary. Reston, Virginia:  
National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1982: 1-11.
- Zalkind, Sheldon S., and Timothy W. Costello. "Perception: Implications for Administration." In David Kolb, Irvin Rubin, and James M. McIntyre. Organizational Psychology: A Book of Readings. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974.

## APPENDIX A

### SUMMARY OF UNSATISFACTORY TEACHER CASES

- Case #1 A first year English teacher was observed by the superintendent during one of his visits to the middle school. The superintendent felt that classroom management was lacking, informed the principal of his concerns, and suggested that the principal contact the supervisor to have her observe the teacher. No further action was required on the principal's part because the situation improved.
- Case #2 A male physical education teacher who had been employed by the school system for six years experienced difficulties when his relationship with a female physical education teacher raised suspicions that they were having an affair. He rejected the directives of his department head who told him that his behavior was jeopardizing her department, with resultant conflicts developing between the two teachers. The principal was able to resolve the issue by concentrating on the interpersonal conflicts between the department head and the teacher. The rumors died down when the teacher's behavior became less obvious.
- Case #3 A female middle school physical education with less than two years of experience in the system and as a teacher was suspected of having an affair with a male physical

education teacher in her school. The principal met with the teacher, informed her of the rumors, and informed her that her behavior with the other teacher was to cease during the school day and at any school related activities. The teacher assured the principal that she and the other teacher were only friends, and that the other teacher (#2) had been assisting her, at her request, in some of her responsibilities.

Case #4 A black male in his mid-twenties had been employed as a special education teacher for three years. Although his evaluation ratings were satisfactory for two years, his performance was considered less than satisfactory by the Assistant Director of Special Education. In apparent good health during this year, the teacher had suffered a heart attack the previous year, requiring a lengthy absence. Prior to a recommendation being submitted in writing, the teacher submitted a resignation for the end of the year.

Case #5 A tall, handsome, young black male found himself in trouble at the beginning of his second year of employment because he lacked the math know-how to teach middle school mathematics. Although the principal liked the teacher, and considered him effective as a teacher in all other respects, the principal informed the teacher that he planned to recommend nonrenewal of his contract because the teacher failed to take courses

offered by the school system during the summer. The teacher accepted the responsibility for not taking the courses, but told the principal and the Director of Personnel that his younger brother, who lived in Chicago, had gotten in trouble during the summer, and his mother needed him at home. The teacher and his wife went to Chicago during time the courses were being offered. The teacher chose to resign, effective at the end of the year, and the recommendation was not necessary.

Case #6 Plagued with marital problems during her second year of employment with the school system, a female special education teacher experienced problems of organization that served as a source of irritation for the principal of the middle school in which she taught. She received several directives because she failed to report that she would not be at work by the prescribed time, and was written up by the special education supervisor because her student files were not up-to-date. When she failed to carry out the extra-curricular assignment of year book sponsor, the school stood to lose \$1200; she experienced the displeasure of the principal. Faced with a possible nonrenewal recommendation, she resigned, effective the end of the year. Throughout the year she had experienced some rather difficult personal problems. After she resigned, the principal told the Director that the teacher shot her husband during the previous summer, and characterized her as a "fool" for going back with her husband.

- Case #7 A black female foreign language teacher in her first year of teaching encountered some difficulties when her behavior was characterized as "silly" and "inmature" by the foreign language supervisor. Her middle school principal was very protective of the teacher, admitting her tendency to be silly, but supporting the teacher because he felt she had potential. Both the supervisor and the principal worked with the teacher during the school year. No Level I or Level II Actions were necessary.
- Case #8 One of the more difficult cases came to a resolution after years of being in existence. Mr. \_\_\_ was a black, 62 year old male handicapped teacher. He had lost both legs to diabetes, but was mobile with two artificle limbs. Mr. \_\_\_'s story began at least six years before this study, and perhaps beyond that time. Because of his inadequacies as a classroom teacher, he was transferred to several different schools where he worked as an assistant to other industrial arts teachers. After short periods of time, those teachers complained about their programs, and Mr. \_\_\_ was transferred again, never with resistance. He had been assigned to his present school for four years. and had been moved from the industrial arts program to art, to science, and was to teach art during this school year until the art supervisor complained to the principal and the superintendent. Mr. \_\_\_ was assigned to science, where he had such

a difficult time, that he was transferred at mid-year to a study hall monitor position until the end of the year when he retired. (He died one year later.)

Case #9 A white, 51 year old female English and foreign language teacher was employed in late September 1979. She had not taught for eleven years, but had been employed as a certification analyst. She experienced discipline problems and often did not meet deadlines. Because she was not receptive to constructive criticism, matters worsened to the point that the middle school principal informed her that he planned to recommend nonrenewal. The recommendation was approved by the school board. The teacher immediately filed an EEOC charge, claiming age discrimination. The EEOC hearing officers ruled in the school system's favor.

Case #10 A white, female first-year teacher experienced discipline problems with her middle school students. After receiving assistance from supervisors and the administration of the school, her performance improved, negating the use of Level I or Level II Actions.

Case #11 A white, experienced teacher was employed at mid-year as a middle school teacher. She was the third teacher to be employed for that position. Her principal recommended nonrenewal because of discipline problems and attitude problems on the part of the teacher. His documentation was sufficient for the recommendation. The recommendation was over-



turned by the assistant superintendent. Reluctantly, the superintendent approved renewal. The teacher was to be assigned to an elementary school. (She was nonrenewed two years later.)

Case #12 A white, male physical education teacher was transferred to a new middle school when it opened in August 1979. Observations by the administration revealed some deficiencies in teaching skills, warranting the assistance of the physical education supervisor. It was the teacher's behavior toward students and other teachers, however, that caused the principal to recommend nonrenewal. When one student reported to the office with a bruised neck, it was learned that the teacher picked the student up by the collar and pushed him against a door facing. The teacher did not deny the incident. Conflict occurred in the Physical Ed. department when teachers in that department complained about the teacher's behavior at basketball games where he had the responsibility of time-keeper. On one occasion, two teachers reported to the principal that the teacher gave the coach of another school the "finger" in full view of students and parents. When the principal talked with the teacher's former principal, she was furious that similar incidents occurred at that school and were not documented. After the recommendation for nonrenewal was made, the teacher filed two grievances, creating stress for the principal. When the grievances were not successful

and the nonrenewal was upheld, the principal submitted a resignation for the end of the year.

Case #13 A white female art teacher resigned from the school system when confronted by the fact that she and a male teacher in the school were living together in the community. After the teacher resigned, the principal reported other complaints that started to emerge from the student body. Some students told of nude pictures of the teacher being kept in the classroom, and of language used by the teacher that a number of students found to be offensive. The complaints were never verified. The teacher was tenured and had been an employee of the system for three years.

Case #14 A white male industrial arts teacher in a large high school resigned when the community complained about his living arrangements with a female teacher (#13). He was a probationary teacher, and apparently well liked by the principal and other teachers in the school.

Case #15 A white, male physical education teacher had previously taught in private and public schools and had been employed in Ridgemont for two years when his principal considered nonrenewal. The teacher's German background was probably a factor in the way he related to the students. Lack of judgment and interpersonal relationships with students seemed to be primary deficiencies in the teacher's performance. The

decision of the principal to give the teacher another year to improve was followed by another decision to give the teacher low rating on his end of the year evaluation, a decision that was challenged by the teacher. The principal was asked to change the rating on one area of job performance as a result of the grievance.

Case #16 These three cases were considered to be "one-timers" in that #17, #18 the principal never actually addressed the problems of the teachers. No communication was ever evidenced by the principal or the Director of Personnel after the first mention of the principal's concerns for the teachers' performances. No data, therefore, was ever gathered on these cases.

Case #19 A white male science teacher in a high school found himself faced with suspension and dismissal when he admitted living with a 17 year old female student in his school. When the principal heard rumors circulating in the school of the alleged marriage of the teacher and the student, she began an investigation that resulted in the ultimate resignation of the teacher. The 34 year old teacher had been recently divorced. He had been a teacher in the school system for seven years.

Case #20 A white male industrial arts teacher resigned the day after his principal informed him that she planned to recommend dismissal because he failed to follow her directives about not leaving his classes unattended. The teacher's interpersonal problems with students, teachers, and administration

were tolerated by the principal for over a year and a half before she really addressed the issue. She admitted that she liked the teacher, but could not tolerate his overt behavior any longer. His defiant attitude seemed to be the "last straw", resulting in the principal's decision to document his insubordination.

Case #21 A white female high school math teacher resigned from the system rather than face a recommendation for termination of her contract. When she was accused of using profanity in the classroom, she was immediately suspended, pending an investigation. Although the behavior was not sufficient to warrant disciplinary action beyond a reprimand, the teacher was allowed to resign because of her unsatisfactory performance in the classroom. She was hired mid-year in the previous year to fill a temporary math vacancy. It was known at the time of her employment that she was not a competent teacher.

Case #22 A white female reading teacher in a high school resigned at the end of the school year because of problems with her principal and less than satisfactory performance as a reading teacher. Although her performance improved during the year, the principal still wanted to recommend nonrenewal. The teacher would have had one more probationary year before being eligible for continuing contract status.

Case #23 These two cases were considered to be "one-timers". Beyond  
& #24 the principal's initial mention of his concerns, no further

contact was made by the principal or the Director of Personnel; therefore, no data was gathered in these two cases.

Case #25 Mrs. \_\_\_\_, a black female English teacher with 23 years of experience was administratively transferred from a middle school, where her principal recommended dismissal, to the newly opened high school. Prior to moving to the high school, the teacher was the subject of numerous complaints by students and parents. The former principal was unable, however, to gather sufficient data to meet the scrutiny of incompetency. Feeling that he was unable to document her performance, and pressured by opening a new school, the high school principal did not take any Level I or Level II Actions. (The teacher was recommended for dismissal the following year.)

Case #26 A white male mechanical drawing teacher resigned in the spring of 1980 when he became the recipient of numerous parent complaints and conferences. In this particular case, feelings between the teacher and the principal were so hostile and the relationships so adversarial that resolution of the problem in any way other than resignation seemed unlikely. Although the teacher's performance was inadequate, the principal failed to document sufficiently, making any action on the part of the school system futile.

Case #27 Very limited information regarding the background of this case is available because the principal did not notify the

Director of Personnel of his concerns until those concerns were expressed in the form of a recommendation for nonrenewal. The teacher's performance in the classroom setting was unsatisfactory, plus conflicts that ensued within the department became credited to the behavior of the teacher. The recommendation for nonrenewal was approved. The teacher resigned before the recommendation went to the superintendent.

- Case #28 A white female first year science teacher experienced difficulties in discipline and was considered weak in instructional skills. The supervisor of science worked with the teacher over a period of several months; when her performance did not improve to the level expected, the principal recommended nonrenewal. The teacher resigned, effective at the end of the school year.
- Case #29 A black female high school math teacher who had been employed by the school system for over twenty years refused to acknowledge that the student complaints were in any way directly related to her performance. She continuously placed the blame for her problems on the caliber of students she had; in her opinion, they were trouble-makers. Her detention and demerit referrals were the highest of any teacher in the school. Inadequate documentation delayed a recommendation for dismissal and transfer.
- Case #30 A black female 48 year old guidance counselor in a high school experienced some problems early in the year when she disagreed

with the assignment given to her by her principal. On two occasions, feelings ran high when the counselor and the principal discussed certain issues. The principal was not totally satisfied with the performance of the counselor who had been in the school for over fifteen years. The guidance counselor felt that the problem was one of personality and lack of communication between the two. After the initial flare up, between the two individuals, the situation seemed to calm down. No further complaints were registered by the principal.

Case #31 A white female 58 year old spanish teacher had been the source of complaints from parents and students for years, but previous principals never went beyond the stage of "putting out fires". During this study, a new principal in the school where the teacher had been teaching for over twenty years, received similar complaints from students and parents about the manner in which the teacher graded the work of students, about the "boring" classes, and the lack of interest in foreign language that resulted in a short period of time. Because he was in a new administrative position, the principal monitored the teacher's performance, but took no Level I or Level II Actions.

Case #32 A white male physical education and social studies teacher was confronted by a parent who objected to his language and threats to her son who requested to be transferred out of

the teacher's room. During a conference with the parent and teacher, the principal was appalled to hear the teacher use "damn" and "I'll burn you" in the conversation with the student. The principal immediately after the conference confronted the teacher about the language, and placed the teacher on notice that such language in the future would result in disciplinary action being taken. No further incidents of that nature were reported to the principal. The principal did monitor the performance of the teacher. Later in the year, the principal commented that the teacher had taken a "180 degree" turnaround in his performance.

Case #33 An experienced special education teacher was hired late in the year even though there were deficiencies in his testing skills. During the year, other factors affected his performance as the teacher was often late for work, frequently absent, and was often seen leaving the building to go to his car. The assistant principal acknowledged that the other teachers "tried to involve him" in their plans and activities, but had become "intolerant of his leaving the class and the building", to the extent that they were keeping records on how much time he spent out of his room. When he was notified that the principal planned to recommend nonrenewal, the teacher submitted a resignation for the end of the school year.



Case #34 Considered to be an unsatisfactory teacher by several elementary supervisors, the 38 year old white female fourth grade teacher faced difficulties during her last probationary year. When parents complained to the assistant superintendent about the teacher and the principal's perceived lack of response to their concerns, the principal was principal was placed under evaluation because of his failure to recognize the inadequacies in the teacher's performance. The teacher was granted continuing contract status because the April 15 deadline for nonrenewal notification passed before the issue was reported to the central office. The teacher resigned at the end of the school year.

Case #35 After only one month into the school year, the art teacher experienced difficulties in classroom management, organization, and instruction. Visits by the supervisor provided books and curriculum guides to help the teacher in providing art that was appropriate for elementary students. The teacher's training and experience was in secondary art. Some of the teachers in the school complained about the lack of art and the quality of what work was done. Some of the teachers requested to be able to teach art to their own students. When the teacher failed to submit the requested lesson plans, the principal finally recommended dismissal. The teacher requested to be allowed to resign, effective at the end of

the school year.

Case #36 When the special education supervisor reviewed the records of students who were being referred to, or were already receiving speech therapy, it was discovered that the speech therapists had inaccurate roles, incomplete records on the students, and paperwork that had never been completed. In almost every respect, the therapist was in violation of the special education regulations. Inasmuch as the therapist had been a therapist in the school system for eight years, the principal could not understand why the records were in in such disarray. The school administration and the supervisor spent hours working with the therapist to get the records in order. When the problem persisted, the Principal placed the teacher under evaluation. By the end of the year, the teacher's evaluation was satisfactory.

Case #37 Emotionally unstable at times, a second grade teacher proved to be source of concern for the principal and supervisors. The principal complained of the teacher being so "doped up" on some days that she could not function in the classroom. On one occasion during the year, the teacher left the school in a depressed state, indicating to the principal that she was going to kill herself. In that instance, the principal was distressed because of the threat of suicide. She finally discussed the matter with the teacher's doctor and with the teacher's sister. As it turned out, the teacher was involved

in a rescue squad to the extent that she was up at all hours of the night during the week, and spending every week-end at the squad, leaving little time for preparation for her classes or for rest. Although there were other personal problems, the teacher's emotional state improved when she gave up some of her responsibilities at the rescue squad.

Case #38 A 59 year old kindergarten teacher did not respond to the supervisor's or her principal's attempts to get the teacher to implement the reading program as it was designed to be used. Three of the four kindergarten teachers resisted the structured program. In a period of two years, the supervisor visited the kindergarten teachers fifteen times to work with them concerning the implementation of the program; she felt this particular kindergarten program was the only one in the system that was not functioning properly. The last straw came when the principal learned that the teacher, along with two other kindergarten teachers, had used 50,000 sheets of ditto paper in the first semester, a realization that brought with it a directive to the teachers that all work to be duplicated was to be approved by her first. When the teacher brought her own paper to school, the principal considered the teacher's actions as insubordination. Events escalated to the point that parents called the school, concerned that their children did not have sufficient paper. Such events led to the princi-

pal recommending transfer for the teacher and two other kindergarten teachers. The teacher filed a grievance and rallied some of the parents behind her so that the issue became public and very stressful for the principal. The teacher was transferred at the end of the year. A circuit court judge ruled in the school system's favor regarding the grievance.

Case #39 A 60 year old kindergarten teacher, along with two other kindergarten teachers failed to implement a reading program in accordance with curriculum guidelines. When she and #38 and #40 failed to follow the principal's directive against using the use of dittos in the kindergarten program, the principal recommended transfer of the teacher from the building. The principal was concerned that the teacher's continued failure to implement the program was detrimental to the progress of the students. The teacher continued to use excessive ditto work after being told that such "busy work" was contrary to the philosophy of the program. The teacher filed a grievance which was unsuccessful. She was transferred at the end of the school year.

Case #40 The youngest member of a kindergarten team of teachers who came in conflict with the principal because of their failure to implement the kindergarten reading program effectively was perhaps caught in a situation where the actions of the other teachers overshadowed the teacher's involvement. Guilt by

association resulted in the teacher being included in the principal's request for transfer. Although the principal felt the teacher's involvement was limited, she could not disassociate the teacher from the others. Once the dye was cast, the teacher became a part of a recommendation. The teacher did not become involved as the other two teachers did in rallying the parents and filing grievances; she made every attempt to rectify her previous actions, but transfer was approved at the end of the year.

Case #41 The principal of a small elementary school reported to the Director of Personnel that he suspected one of his teachers was using drugs. A teacher aide told the principal she saw the special education teacher "sniffing glue" on one occasion. According to the principal, the 22 year old teacher was often late to work because of "allergies", but he questioned whether allergies were the problem. Without sufficient evidence, beyond speculation, and the one instance involving glue, the principal did not pursue the matter further. Other than reported concerns about the teacher's classroom organization, no further instances were evident during the year. The teacher did not return to the school at the beginning of the next school year. His contract was terminated in August 1980 when he failed to report to work; no one was able to reach the teacher.

Case #42 When a fifth grade teacher refused to explain the circumstances regarding an incident that allegedly occurred in his classroom, the principal contacted the Director of Personnel and other central office administrators to express his concern and irritation over the behavior of the teacher. The teacher, a white, male in his late fifties, had over the years been a source of concern for certain parents in the community. As the principal indicated, there were a number of parents who "were out to get" the teacher. In this particular situation, a parent complained to the principal that the teacher made a remark to the students that "he (teacher) was tired of parents complaining about grades" and another statement that "if the parents cared anything about them (students), they (parents) would make certain their children's faces and hands were clean". The parent was conveying information overheard in a discussion of boys at a school soccer game. Although the incident seemed simple enough to resolve, the teacher refused to discuss the matter without the UniServ Director present. When that was denied by the principal, the teacher was absent for one week with high blood pressure. The principal also reacted to the situation, primarily based on past experiences with the teacher. The principal approached the Director of Personnel with an unofficial request to transfer the teacher. After returning to school, the teacher met with the parent and was able to satisfy the parent's concern.

- Case #43 Dissatisfied with the performance of his librarian who was within one year of retirement, the principal sought the assistance of the supervisor of library services. The principal admitted to the Director of Personnel that he could not evaluate the performance of the librarian because he was not familiar with the performance expectations of the position. Within a month, the principal contacted the Director of Personnel to inform her that he was "upset with the supervisor" whom he felt did not want to "handle the problem", thus, leaving him with the sole responsibility for observing and documenting. He indicated that he would "ride out one more year".
- Case #44 A primary teacher's behavior toward a parent, who was also a teacher aide in the same school, angered the principal to the point that he reprimanded the teacher and indicated to her that he felt she should transfer to another school. The incident occurred when the teacher was rude to the parent and then failed to give the principal an accurate account of the incident. Other parents had complained to the principal about the teacher's behavior toward them. No further incidents occurred, and no further action was taken by the principal.
- Case #45 An elementary principal was frustrated over the behavior of one of his primary teachers who was having difficulties in relating to students. She had been observed "Putting the

children down" and embarrassing them in front of their peers. She had indicated to a parent that her child couldn't learn, an incident that angered the principal, who indicated that he couldn't believe her actions toward the parent. On several occasions, the principal visited the teacher's classroom, discussed his concerns with her, and felt "floored" that his criticisms of her performance seemed to have no effect on the teacher. Frustrated by her lack of acceptance of her problem, the principal sought the assistance of a supervisor, and discontinued his observations because he felt he had a "closed mind" toward the teacher. No further incidents were reported by the principal.

Case #46 An upper elementary teacher was recommended for nonrenewal at the end of her third probationary year because of performance problems. The principal and supervisor had spent considerable time with the teacher who was ending her fifth year of teaching. Concerned that the teacher's performance would never improve beyond its present level, the principal decided to recommend nonrenewal. The teacher submitted her resignation for the end of the year.

Case #47 The assistant principal of a large elementary school called the Director of Personnel to discuss her concerns about Mrs. \_\_, a fourth grade teacher in her school. According to the assistant principal, Mrs. \_\_ was being "extremely difficult to



work with". She expressed concern that Mrs. \_\_\_ was having a nervous breakdown because she "feels we (the administration) are persecuting her". "She's really acting funny," the assistant stated again. When asked by the Director if there were any family or personal problems that she knew about, the assistant indicated that she was not aware of any problems. She further indicated that everything seemed to be satisfactory in the classroom. She was advised to try and find out the cause of the teacher's perceptions about the administration and the seemingly strained relationship that existed. Several months later, the Director of Personnel visited the school and was informed that things had improved, however, the administration felt that Mrs. \_\_\_ was experiencing emotional problems, probably because of her age. She was 60 years old. No other incidents were reported to the Director during the year.

Case #48 In the last year of his probationary status, a male upper elementary teacher was perceived by the principal as having some problems in planning. The supervisor had also verified that the teacher "would probably never be more than average" Without adequate documentation being developed during the year, the principal, with extreme reservations, decided to recommend continuing contract status. She felt that the teacher would be more effective on the secondary level.

Case #49 Mrs. \_\_\_ was an upper elementary teacher who seemed to irritate principals in every school in which she taught. During the 1979-1980 school year, she returned from a year's leave of absence. She had been on a maternity leave. During the year the principal reported that she was "abrasive and abusive" to students and parents. The principal had not selected Mrs. \_\_\_ but had to take her because of the availability of positions when the teacher returned. The Director of Personnel advised the principal to address the issue of the ineffective relationship with students and parents. When the principal indicated that she had, the Director informed the principal that evaluation could be one avenue available to her if the teacher's behavior did not improve. During the year, the teacher was placed under evaluation. She received a satisfactory evaluation at the end of the year.

Case #50 Mrs. \_\_\_, an elementary librarian, was in her last probationary year of service to the county, when difficulties continued to mount. She offended a number of classroom teachers by making remarks in front of their students about the teachers being late to the library session. On one occasion, a student returned to his classroom without the projector he was sent to library to get. He told the teacher that the librarian told him that if "Mrs. \_\_\_ wants the projector, she should come get it." That comment resulted in a group of teachers (5) going

to the principal's office for a conference. Several other incidents with other teachers occurred during the school, resulting in the principal recommending nonrenewal. The recommendation was not upheld at the central office level, and the teacher was transferred to another elementary school the following year.

Case #51 Miss \_\_\_ was hired in January 1979 and declared surplus from that school at the end of the year. She was transferred to a large elementary school where she began to experience difficulties early in the year. She did not have a good command of the English language, and there were instructional problems that she was never able to sufficiently improve. The principal recommended nonrenewal. The recommendation was upheld.

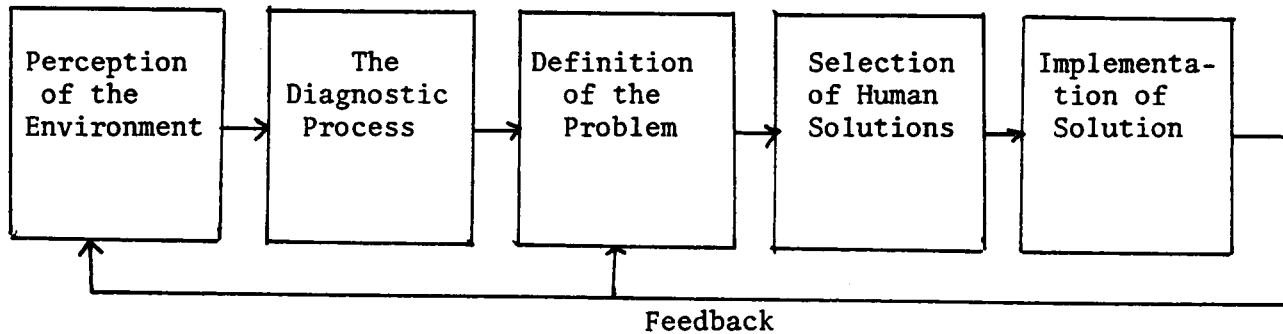
Case #52 When an elementary principal transferred to another school, he called the Director of Personnel shortly after the 1979-1980 school year began. He was concerned about his librarian whom he perceived to be ineffective. He felt that she did not portray the "image" that he needed in his school, which was located in one of the wealthier communities in the county. Because the librarian had been in the school system for 25 years and because she was a minority, the principal acknowledged that he did not plan to "get rid of" her. Instead he planned to assign one of the teacher aides to the library and provide better services to the teachers in his school.

Case #53 An upper elementary teacher admitted that he had taught the contents of a standardized test to his students prior to the test being administered. He further acknowledged that he had done the same thing the year before. The teacher was notified by his principal in early December that his contract would not be renewed at the end of the school year. After trying unsuccessfully to have the decision reversed, the teacher resigned in December 1979. The teacher contended throughout the investigation that he was not aware that he had followed improper procedures.

## APPENDIX B

### THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Elbing's Model (1978:12)



1. Perception of the environment or situation: observing and becoming sensitive to potential problem situations.
2. Diagnosis: attempting to understand what is happening in a particular problem situation
3. Definition of the problem to be solved: identifying and stating a problem in relation to organizational and personal goals.
4. Determination of alternative methods and solutions and choice of the best solution: selecting a course of action from a series of alternatives.
5. Implementation of the chosen solution: the entire process of actualizing the chosen solution.

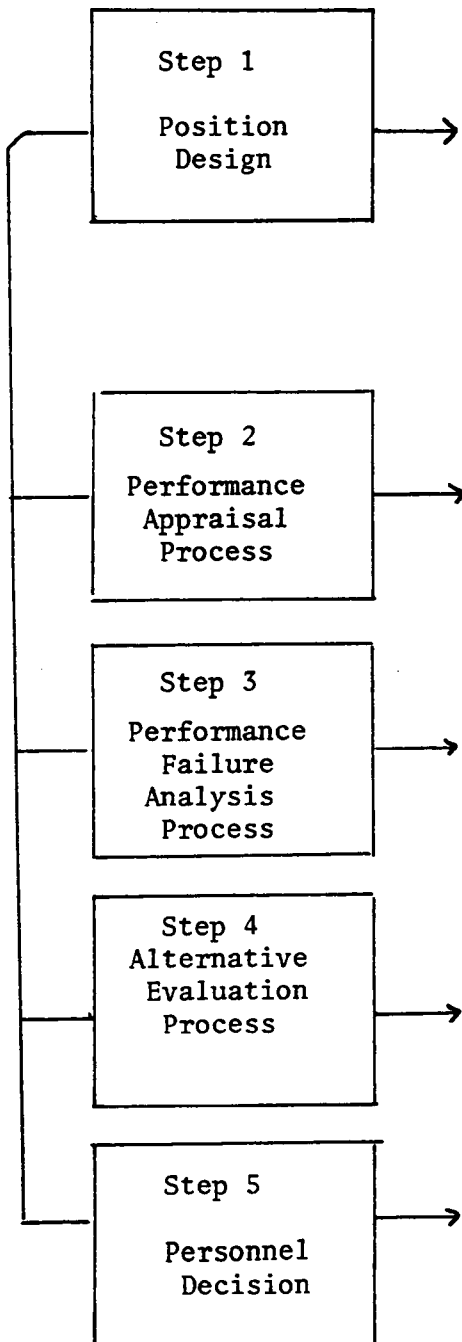
These five steps are integral parts of the decision-making process and cannot be avoided. Whether followed consciously or unconsciously, explicitly or implicitly, they are inherent in the role of the manager in the following ways (Elbing 1978:12):

1. A manager inevitably experiences feelings of disequilibrium and regards some situations as problem situations, whether or not there is a clear, identifiable basis for this perception.
2. The response to the disequilibrium necessarily involves an assumption about the underlying cause, or a diagnosis of the situation, whether or not this diagnosis is conscious, systematic, and explicit.
3. The response to the disequilibrium necessarily implies definition of the problem to be solved, whether definition of the problem is ambiguous or clear, sound or unsound, explicit or implicit.

4. The response constitutes a selection of method and solution, whether by conscious design or not.
5. Finally, the response also constitutes implementation of the choice, whether or not it actually leads to the solution of the problem.

MODEL OF THE PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVENESS  
PLANNING PROCESS

Castetter, 1981:285



The first step in the performance effectiveness planning process is to clarify questions such as the following: Why is the position needed? What is the position's unique contribution to the school? What authority and responsibility does the position have? What does the organization manual say about the position? Have the general output requirements of the position been established? The specific output requirements and the measurement criteria? Step 1 is not focused upon individuals, but rather upon position role, especially results anticipated.

The purpose of Step 2 is to identify those individuals in the system who are in the process of becoming ineffective performers. The human resources information system of the school system is searched for judgments, reports, facts, observations, critical incidents, evaluations, grievances, and recruitment and selection information to provide a data base to utilize in testing failure hypotheses.

This step focuses on the identification of the factors that have combined to produce individual performance failure. Failure hypotheses are developed and tested against the performance data base compiled for each ineffective performer.

Decision is made on the basis of information compiled in previous steps to outplace the individual (resignation, termination, retirement) or to initiate a development program to improve effectiveness.

The sequence of actions to be carried out in order to remove from the system or to improve the effectiveness of the individual. Among the possibilities for improvement are these: transfer of work, transfer of personnel, temporary assignments, special tasks, discipline, counseling, medical treatment, etc.

**The two page vita has been  
removed from the scanned  
document. Page 1 of 2**



**The two page vita has been  
removed from the scanned  
document. Page 2 of 2**

THE PRINCIPAL AND THE UNSATISFACTORY

TEACHER: A FIELD STUDY

BY

Joyce S. Luck

(ABSTRACT)

Of all the decisions made by the school principal, those pertaining to the unsatisfactory teacher appear to be the most difficult. This field study describes, analyzes, and interprets the dynamics and behaviors of principals in Ridgemont County School System as they confronted and attempted to resolve problems of the unsatisfactory teacher.

Two analytical schemes were utilized: one scheme summarized and characterized the types and frequencies of unsatisfactory teacher behaviors; the second scheme analyzed the decision making behaviors of principals during the identification-resolution process in terms of a specific decision making model. The analyses were the result of a year of field work by the researcher who assumed the role of participant observer.

The research disclosed that the majority of the problems fell under the label "incompetency" and that this group presented the greatest difficulty and stress to principals. Almost one half of the problems were resolved as some form of termination of services. The study also concluded that the influences, both perceptual and

environmental, often had the effect of diminishing the quality of the decision making process. Although loss of objectivity frequently made the processes ineffective, the principals generally produced effective resolutions.

This study has provided additional information about the role of the principalship, by providing greater insight into the dynamics involved in dealing with the unsatisfactory teacher.